

To Helen + Elmer

Christmas 1944

from
The Palmers

The Epistle to the Ephesians

FOR LAYMEN

By

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Dedicated to the
Children of Faith

Nineteen Hundred and Thirty-one

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Preface

The hope of the author in sending forth this volume is that it may encourage Bible reading and study. The studies, twelve in number, are designed to aid laymen to understand the more fundamental truths of Christianity.

The "Epistle to the Ephesians" was addressed to members of the body of Christ without distinction of rank as to their position in the Church, and it was evidently believed by the writer of the epistle that those we call laymen, under proper instructors, would be able, intellectually and spiritually, to grasp its import.

A biblically informed layman is a spur to mental and spiritual effort upon the part of the minister. A great sermon is great to a great hearer. A great hearer is spiritually hungry and biblically informed. Many otherwise great messages, living messages, die in their delivery. The messenger instead of receiving mental stimulation from sympathetic hearers is forced to listen to the echo of his own thoughts, and whereas he began the delivery of his message "in the spirit," abashed, "he ends in the flesh." All gospel messages are biblical, therefore, laymen have within their reach the text of such messages. And whilst they require that their pastors be mentally equipped and Spirit-filled they must bear in mind that biblical information and the Holy Spirit can not take their place in rendering aid to the pulpit. Through a biblically informed pew the author seeks to aid both pulpit and pew.

A. E. W.

• *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman
that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of
truth.”—2 Tim. 2. 15.* •

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Introduction

I.

EPHESUS AND ITS FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Ephesus, one of the twelve Ionian cities in Asia Minor in the Mythic times, was located near the mouth of Caystrus river, between Miletus and Smyrna. Two hundred and eighty-one B. C. it was included in the territories of Governor Lysimachus, to whose favor, largely, the city owed its prosperity. It was recognized at this time and later as one of the most important Greek cities of Asia Minor. Three hundred years later, when Paul visited the city, it had long since passed from under the control of the Greeks to the Romans, and had become the capital of the entire province of Asia, and bore the title "of the first and greatest metropolis of Asia."

One of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, the famous temple of Diana, was located in the city of Ephesus. The temple of Diana was the largest Greek temple ever constructed. It was 425 feet long, 220 feet wide, and contained 128 marble columns, 36 of which were carved and the height of each was 60 feet. The roof was covered with white marble tiles. Its seating capacity was 24,500, and the reverence with which the Ephesians held it was both religious and patriotic.

The temple was partly destroyed by Herostratus, whose purpose in doing so was to make a place in history for his name. How such a thing as the destruction of the temple could come to pass, inasmuch as it was under the protection of the goddess, in whose honor it had been built, was accounted for by the plausible (?) theory that Diana, in company with Olympias, was that night at the birthplace (356

B. C.) of Alexander. At a later period, Alexander offered to rebuild the temple, provided he was allowed to inscribe his name on the front, which was refused. It was, however, rebuilt in a style of greater splendor than before by the inhabitants of Ephesus, the women contributing their ornaments to secure the funds. Two hundred and twenty years were required to reconstruct the temple.

After serving the Ephesians for seven hundred years as an object of local pride and as a center of patriotic and religious fervor, the temple was plundered by Nero and later was burned by the Goths, from which it never recovered. It was finally destroyed in the reign of Theodosius I, whose edict against the corrupt ceremonies of the pagan religions was issued 381 A. D.

Our study requires that we recognize the Ephesus of Paul's day as a center of idolatry, sorcery and magic. The superstitions of the East and West met here and gave birth to new superstitions. Multitudes of the Ephesians were addicted to sorcery. Many of them were adepts in the occult sciences, and traveled from place to place, "deceiving the credulous multitude and profiting by their expectations." Not a few of the magic performers were of Paul's own nation, and they justified their works and added emphasis thereto, by referring their skill and practices to Solomon, whom they claimed had been the head of magicians. The books burned (Acts 19:19) were writings on magic, and the price of them was "fifty thousand pieces of silver."

Reference has been made to "Diana of the Ephesians" and to her numerous progeny of superstitious children that we may have an intelligent understanding of the difficulties that the gospel herald faced in the city of Ephesus. As Moses met and triumphed over the magicians of Egypt, in like manner, Paul met and triumphed over the sorcerers of Ephesus, at least, to the extent that he succeeded in planting the Christian Church in the "metropolis of Asia Minor."

II.

THE PLANTING OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN EPHESUS

It was probably A. D. 55, when Paul began his missionary work in the city of Ephesus. *"And he came to Ephesus, and left them (Priscilla and Aquila) there; but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; but bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus."* Acts 18.19-21.

"And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ." Acts 18.24-28.

"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ

Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve.

“And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. . . . And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the cost of them, and found it fifty thousand peices of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.” Acts 19.1-10, 18-20.

III.

CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS.

“Unto the Angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou hast fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou

hatest the deeds of Nicolaitians which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Rev. 2.1-7.

According to Ignatius the church at Ephesus profited by the exhortation, heeded the warning and returned to its first love. In time Christian churches rivaled pagan temples in costliness and splendor. The third ecumenical council was held in Ephesus in 431 A. D. Later than this but little is known of the Christian churches in the city of Ephesus. Evidently the candlestick was finally removed. Gibbon says, "The captivity or ruin of the seven churches of Asia Minor was consummated; and the barbarous lords of Ionia and Lydia still trample on the monuments of classic and Christian antiquity. In the loss of Ephesus, the Christians deplored the fall of the first angel, the extinction of the candlestick of the revelation; the desolation is complete; and the temple of Diana or the church of Mary will equally elude the search of the curious traveler."

The names of such men as Paul, John the Beloved disciple, Timothy and Apollos are associated with the Christian Church at Ephesus. Timothy is thought to have been the pastor of the church when the letter was written. Tradition has it that John the apostle lived the closing years of his life there.

IV.

RUINS OF EPHEBUS

In early April, 1904, the writer visited the site, and looked on the ruins of what was once the proud and wealthy city of Ephesus. Time, earthquakes, floods, winds and the vandal hands of man, have left only wreckage and ruin where once stood in "splendor array" the finest works of human genius and skill. The deserted streets and high-ways, sublimely eloquent with the mental echo of the voice of the great apostle of the Gentiles, are insistent reminders that the

crowded thoroughfares of today shall resound with no foot-fall tomorrow, but like the broken fragments of Ephesus, shall be wrapped in the silence of the grave.

Excavators a few years before had uncovered what proved to be the foundation and a dozen or more of the wall-stones of the temple of Diana. The multitudes who once thronged its courts and crowded within its spacious walls had long ago ceased their comings; the dust of their bodies rests in the grave. The eye that now looked on was strange; the heart felt the pity of it all. It was only an imaginary echo which came from the distant hills and fell on the ear, shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

Not far from where once stood the temple of Diana, the ruins of the church of St. John were pointed out. Part of the front wall and an arched doorway were all that remained to bear witness of the edifice whose pulpit was believed to have been honored by the presence of the beloved disciple. He being dead, yet spake as of old, "Little children love one another."

Near the ruins of the church of St. John stood a stone tower of considerable height. On the top of the tower a stork had built her nest, and while I looked, weary of wing, she returned to her brood and took up her maternal watch.

The excavation of the Forum had been most successful. Near by, there had been uncovered the Roman theater, into which the angry mob, "having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, had rushed with one accord. And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not." Demetrius, a silversmith, had caused the uproar.

Why my fellow-American travelers chose this place in which to conduct a religious service rather than the spot where had stood the church of the beloved disciple, I know not; unless, indeed, they thought to take the side of Paul against his enemies, by coming from afar, nineteen centuries after the apostle had all but been mobbed, and singing,

"All hail the power of Jesus name,
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all."

And they sang it right heartily. Some wept for joy. Some wondered, "Does Paul know?" A few with downcast faces were choked to silence. Nature, too, was busy. Heavy clouds had been gathering, and when the singing had reached "concert pitch" the rain descended and the floods came, but above the roar of wind and rain rose the voices of five hundred singers:

"Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To him all majesty ascribe,
And crown him Lord of all."

"O that with yonder sacred throng
We at his feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown him Lord of all."

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—John 8.32.

V.

AUTHOR, TIME, PLACE, PEOPLE, OBJECT, SUBJECT

Near the end of 62, or the beginning of the year 63, A. D. St. Paul wrote from Rome, where he was a prisoner, the Epistle to the Ephesian Christian. It is generally admitted that Paul is the author of the epistle, and that it was written to the Ephesians along with several other churches.

The specific object that occupied the writer's attention was the revelation, explanation, of the mystery of redemption. There were some points in the foreordained plan of redemption that had not been fully explained for the reason that

they had been hidden in God, but were now revealed by the Holy Spirit. The mystery, so far as finite minds are able to grasp it, is now cleared up. It was the fullness of redemption, and the universality of its application that thrilled the apostle and found expression in "fullness," "riches," "abounded," "exceeding riches," "riches of glory," "and exceedingly abundant." Never did inspiration find a more praiseful medium of expression than in Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians.

The following variety of views upon the matter of subjects has been advanced: (1) "The desire of the author was to lift the church to a sense of her unity by presenting her to herself as the body of Jesus Christ and by holding before her at the same time a higher conception of the person of Jesus Christ than had been hitherto held." Such a presentation of unity would repress the conflict between Judaists and Paulinists. (2) "The unity of the church was the primary theme of the epistle." A number of churches existed in Asia Minor, planted by others, alongside of those which had been organized by St. Paul. These did not always harmonize with each other." (3) "The theme of the epistle is found in the idea of a divine plan dominating the development of the moral plan of the universe." In the gospel plan the difference between Judaism and Paganism would find a solution and disappear." (4) "The epistle had a speculative aim." Hitherto the apostle had preached the gospel as a means of salvation: in this letter he raises it to the plane of a key to a cosmic philosophy. He shows that redemption is the eternal thought of God embracing not only all the ages, but also the entire universe. (5) "The key to the design of the letter is found in the 1st verse of the 4th chapter: 'I therefore beseech you to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.' The aim is practical. The greatness of the salvation enjoyed by believers, the exaltation of Christ their redeemer, the dignity and unity of the church, are in order that a desire for pure and dignified living might be fostered thereby."

The foregoing subjects are to be found in the epistle: which one is *the* subject depends upon one's point of view. The variety of views concerning the subject of the epistle makes clear the "abundant fullness" of the epistle. Personally, I submit the essential theme of the epistle to be "The larger sphere of the purpose of the infinite God in Christ as revealed by the Holy Spirit," based upon Ch. 1.10; 3.8-12. The larger sphere of the divine purpose had been "hid in God," but was now made known to and through the apostle Paul.

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CHAPTER I.

THEME: SALUTATION AND BENEDICTION

I. *Salutation:*

v. 1.—“*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.*”

a. The twelve epistles and one letter credited to the apostle Paul began with his name. Salutations required the name or names of those extending them. The apostle Peter, and James and Jude followed this rule. The epistle to the Hebrews having no salutation, and the epistle failing to clearly disclose the identity of the author, places the authorship of this great message in doubt. It may have been written by Paul, or it may have been translated from the Hebrew by Paul, or he may have supplied the idea and another wrote it, or it may have been written by Luke, or Clement of Rome, or Barnabas. Personally, I am inclined to the opinion of Luther that the epistle to the Hebrews was written by Apollos.

The “modesty” that led a biblical writer to conceal his identity was *wholly unlike Paul*.

b. *Title:*

The apostle Paul in nine of his epistles made place for his official position in his salutations, “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus.” The apostle Peter in the two epistles credited to him used his official title; James and Jude, who were not apostles, claimed the high honor of being servants of Christ. The apostle Paul in first and second Thessalonians, Philip-pians and Philemon omitted his official title. In his epistle

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to the Philippians, he and Timothy are "the servants of Christ Jesus"; to Philemon he is "the prisoner of Christ Jesus"; to Titus he is "a servant of God and an apostle of Christ Jesus," but in his messages to the Thessalonians he omits both "servant" and "apostle." The omission in these epistles is to be accounted for, as I understand it, on the ground that the subject-matter contained in the *written* messages, for the most part, had been given when he was present with them by word of mouth as the "apostle of Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 2. 3-12), hence it would have been superfluous for him in sending to them additional information upon subjects and matters already revealed to repeat his "official" relation to them.

c. Persons Addressed:

The persons addressed were "the saints at Ephesus, and the faithful," which likely included other believers living in the Ionian district. The distinction, in the mind of the apostle, between the "saints" and the "faithful" is not clear. The double designation has suggested to some students the objective and subjective sides to the covenant of salvation through "grace by faith." It is not improbable that the apostle used the word "saint" to describe those who had recently accepted their "standing in Christ," while the "faithful, believers" refers to those further advanced in the Christian graces, and had given evidence of Christian fidelity.

One point is clear: the persons addressed were receiving Life from Jesus Christ, and all such aided by qualified teachers would be mentally and spiritually qualified to grasp the import of the message. The epistle was not addressed to the "super-intellectuals", but to those who in our day are called laymen; humble, Spirit-born men and women gathered from the common walks of life. It was expected that Spirit-born men and women would receive digestible food from the epistle; food that would give them strength to serve one

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another and enable them to grow up into the likeness of Jesus in "all things." (Ch. 4. 15.) Did Paul over-reach the mark? Were laymen more intelligent nineteen centuries ago than they are today? Recently, it was said in my presence by one who stood high as a minister in his denomination that "the epistle to the Ephesians" was "the Spirit's message to preachers, that it was beyond the understanding of laymen." Paul was of a different opinion.

Great progress has been made since the days of the apostle Paul in nearly all lines of human research and endeavor. The spirit and courage of adventure on land, in the air and on the water, especially within the last fifty years, have gone far toward "subduing" the earth and harnessing nature's forces which have proven to be of great service to the human family. The conquest of mind over matter has its place on the program of the Creator in behalf of the human race. (Ge. 1:26-28). But, have spiritual understanding and achievement kept step with scientific conquests? Does the inside fruitfulness of the organized Church of Jesus in the more Christianized countries of the world balance the outside material dimensions? Is the spirit of Christian courage as daring in Christian countries in the present century as it was in the first century of the Christian era? Is the world asking the Church "where is thy God?" (Ps. 42:3). It would be unfair to judge the matter by referring to the graves of those who in England, Germany, France and in America sacrificed their lives to advance the cause of material conquests. It should be remembered that the children of the human race as a whole during the centuries past have been so given to the task of answering what shall we eat and what shall we wear, and in painting their conceptions on canvas, and in chiseling out of marble and moulding out of clay their ideas and ideals of infinite forces, that down to within the last century and a half the tremendous task of subjecting the titanic forces of nature to the will and service of man had

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been all but neglected. Now that struggle is on with a persistence and sacrificial spirit hitherto unknown in the history of the human race. And it is conceded that crowns of achievement are being justly placed on the head of scientific conquests, in countries more or less Christian, rather than on the spiritual achievements of the Otterbeins, Luthers and Wesleys. May it be that in some tomorrow the scarred scientists shall come trudging wearily up the rugged hill of sacrifice to be met by the child of Christian faith, equally scarred, at the eternal center of the physical, moral and spiritual universe, Christ and His Cross? Shall faith be heard to say to science, "you are an essential part of God's answer to my prayer?"

The danger of our time lies in the direction of materialism. Conquests of a material kind begets in the hearts of the unthinking the thought that God is not needed which is the first mile toward the man described as a "fool" by the Psalmist. (Ps. 14:1). The mind of the brilliant man may lack profundity. Trees that grow tall and send out many branches which are clothed with heavy foliage need to be deeply rooted.

The claim that this epistle was not Paul's, but that it was the message of the Holy Spirit sent through the apostle makes the matter more serious. The Holy Spirit would not send or cause to be sent a message that would lie beyond the mental and spiritual understanding of those to whom it was sent. Surely, an earthly father would not write or cause to be written a will with the thought of concealing his wishes. Our heavenly Father has caused His will concerning his children on earth to be written, and through his over-ruling providence has executed his plan to place His will in the hands of His children that all might know its provisions for childhood's immature thought and faith, youth's protection and guidance, manhood's opportunities and responsibilities and old age's hope and comfort. The

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heavenly Father has an infinite longing that His finite children understand and do his will. For the child to live "in the will of God his Father" is to live in the heart of peace and eternal security. (Isa. 26:3).

d. Paul's Apostleship.

Paul offers one authoritative reason for addressing the Christians of Ephesus—his apostleship. "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus" occupies the emphatic position. From whence did he receive his authority to occupy the position of an apostle? He claims the supreme source of all authority, "the will of God." Had Paul misinterpreted his Father's will? The Judaistic branch of the Church called Paul an impostor, a messenger of man. (Gal. 1:1).

It is fitting that we consider the scriptural qualifications of an apostle, and compare Paul's claim with the qualifications required that we may satisfy ourselves that the "apostle to the Gentiles" received his apostolic authority "through the will of God."

The apostle John records Jesus as laying down the first qualification of an apostle. It must be recognized that the first apostolic qualification gave the apostles and all believers one of the great keywords of Christian expansion, that of "witnessing." The first apostles went forth bearing witness, testifying to the world "those things they had seen and heard." (Jn. 15:27).

It is evident that Paul could not qualify as a material witness. It had not been his privilege to see Jesus, neither before his death, nor after his resurrection. But the fact must not be overlooked that Jesus was a man of at least two worlds, the natural and the spiritual, the earthly and the heavenly. There were many to testify (1 Cor. 15:6) that they had seen Jesus after his resurrection, and the testimony of such eye and ear witnesses was essential to the external ground of faith. But the case is not closed. Jesus had told his disciples that if they loved him, they would rejoice

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because he had said, "I go unto the Father." (Jn. 14:28). This revelation Jesus made to his disciples the night of his betrayal. After his resurrection Jesus commissioned Mary Magdalene to go to his brethren, "and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God." (Jn. 20:17).

The disciples had had the privilege of witnessing Christ's ascension, but what had become of him? Conjecture dare not be accepted as the "ground of eternal hope." The descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, which had been promised, and which had come from the Father in the name of Christ, must be accepted as evidence of the fact that Jesus had reached his heavenly destination. (Ac. 2:1-18). The vision of Stephen, which afforded him the great privilege of testifying to a mob of angry men, within an hour of his death, that he "saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God" must be accepted as further evidence of the fact that Jesus had reached his high-priestly "place" in the heavenly. (Ac. 7:55).

Now, there must be added an additional link to the chain of evidence. Christian Faith presents the strongest human witness of all, Paul. Modestly, this witness of small stature, confesses that to himself, and doubtless to others, he appears "as one born out of due time," however, while many had testified that they had seen Jesus after his resurrection, he had *seen* and *heard* Jesus after he had reached the "heavenly places." (Ac. 9:4; 1 Cor. 15:8). With great courage he faces the real question, "am I not an apostle? . . . Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" (1 Cor. 9:1). The scene changes. The apostle is standing on the step of the prison castle in Jerusalem. He is bruised, bleeding, and bound with two chains testifying to his intolerant countrymen that he had been chosen to *know* the will of God, and to *see* and *hear* the "Just One," and to be his witness unto all men. (Ac. 22:14, 15).

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Jesus Christ, according to Matthew 10:5, laid down a second qualification of an apostle of the first order; namely, that his call and commission must come direct from Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul fully met this requirement. (Ac. 9:15).

Third, Jesus promised his apostles special inspiration and revelation. (Jn. 16:13). The apostle Paul did not fall short in this particular. (1 Cor. 2:10; Gal. 1:11, 12).

Fourth. The apostles were equipped with supernatural gifts. (Mat. 10:8; Ac. 2:43). It is evident that the apostle Paul possessed a liberal share of such gifts. (Ac. 14:8-10; 28:4-8).

Fifth, the mission of the apostles was universal. They were the oracles to mankind. They had the care of all the churches. Especially was this true of Paul. (2 Cor. 11:28). In matters of faith the parish of the apostles includes the Christian Church of the twentieth century!

The authority to pronounce judgment upon certain offenders, may have been an apostolic gift, within exceedingly narrow limits, and within such limits it was the authority of God that was exercised. The apostle Peter did not, as we understand the case, pronounce the death sentence on Ananias, but disclosed to him the tragical fact "that he had lied to God," and "straightway Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost." It may be that Ananias saw in his sin as it was held before him by the apostle the "death penalty." The apostle may have so understood it and so intended it, but he did not say so. Three hours later when Sapphira, wife of Ananias, appeared before the apostle with the same kind of lie in her heart, and learned of the judgment that had befallen her husband, she was informed by the apostle Peter that the men who had buried her husband were waiting at the door to carry her out. Sapphira fell dead at the apostle's feet. In this latter case the "death penalty" was not pronounced, but it was foretold. Shock

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could have been the cause of her death. (Ac. 5:1-10).

The apparent judgment pronounced on Simon the magician, by the apostle Peter in the words, "thy money perish with thee," did not take effect at once; possibly the magician was saved from perishing by reason of his cry, "Pray ye to the Lord, that none of these things . . . come upon me." (Ac. 8:18-24).

Judging by the circumstances and the language recorded, Acts 13:6-11, Paul exercised the gift of pronouncing judgment upon a man who attempted to stand between the deputy of the island of Paphos and Jesus Christ which called forth from the apostle a definite judgment that was immediately fulfilled.

If we accept Matthias and Paul there were thirteen apostles, but the claim for Matthias rests alone upon the fact that he was elected to the position by the casting of lots. We have no evidence that he ever attempted to fill the position. The choice, in the upper room, was between two men, and while the prayer that attended the casting of lots shows that the electors were sincere, the fact remains that the choice had to fall on one of two men. It can not be claimed with any degree of certainty that either Matthias or Justus was called of God to fill the place left vacant by the death of Judas Iscariot. It must not in all reason be lost to view that there is a fundamental difference between an apostle *elected* by men and one *given* by Christ.

It is important that we remember that Jesus had commanded the eleven to tarry in Jerusalem until they would receive (Ac. 1:4, 8) the power of the Holy Spirit which had been promised them by the Father. There was nothing indefinite about what they were to do. When they assumed the authority to "elect" an apostle they assumed authority that did not belong to them, but to Jesus alone. "He gave apostles"; "he gave" is emphatic. (Ep. 4:11). Had "the time been full" Jesus would have "given" an apostle to fill

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the vacancy before he ascended to the Father. Jesus *did not give* an additional apostle at that time for the reason that he was waiting for the disclosure of his Father's will relative to the "man born out of due time."

We feel fully justified in claiming that Paul's position as an apostle stands vindicated before the Court of heaven and before the intelligent judgment of the Church of Christ on earth. Therefore, his right to send a thrilling message to the Christians of Ephesus, and on down through the centuries to the believers in Jesus, was the right of an "apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God."

II. INTRODUCTORY BENEDICTION:

v. 2.—"*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Grace and peace are companion blessings, and both come from God and Jesus Christ. While it is understood that God the Father is the source of all blessings, and that Jesus Christ is the Medium through whom they are made accessible, nevertheless, the will and purpose of the Son being "one" with the Father authorizes the benediction "grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." So closely related are Father and Son, and so eternally united in One in the essence of being that Jesus could truthfully say "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (Jn. 14:9).

The word "grace" which occurs thirteen times in this epistle has led some students to denominate it "the epistle of grace." In the logical order of the divine plan it would seem that grace as a blessing bestowed must precede peace. In our lesson grace has a two-fold significance. First, grace means the "free gift of eternal salvation in Christ which is received by faith." The recipient is not expected to find merit, neither in himself, nor in the faith exercised. He can find in himself the fact that he is *worth* saving and that he

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needs to be saved, but these are something else. Merit and worth are not synonymous; neither are merit and need synonymous. When the penitent sinner receives the gift of eternal salvation in Christ he meets God's terms, and there comes into his heart a sense of profound peace, rest in Christ (Ro. 5:1), and he sings:

“There comes to my heart one sweet strain,
A glad and a joyous refrain;
I sing it again and again,
Sweet peace the gift of God's love.”

A father has it in his heart and within his ability to bestow a gift upon an undeserving son. The son is cognizant of the fact that the gift is an expression of his father's goodness and kindness and in no sense merited by the son's virtues. The son accepts the gift with a clear understanding of that which it expresses and thereby is “at one” with his father, *at peace*.

A second significance of the word grace in our lesson is that it reveals the character of the giver. Gifts express character. God's grace describes his nature toward man. The free gift of eternal salvation reveals the infinite graciousness of God the Giver. None understood better than Paul the unmeasured power of the “gospel of grace.”

“May grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” be graciously granted to you who read these words. Amen.

CHAPTER II.

THEME: THE SURE GROUND OF ETERNAL HOPE.

THANKSGIVING:

v. 3. *"Blessed (be) the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all blessings of the Spirit in the heavenly places in Christ."*

Following the salutation and introductory benediction, the apostle begins his message with an anthem of thanksgiving. The anthem sets forth the work of the Holy Trinity in establishing a household of spiritual children. The nature of the blessings the Father bestows and Jesus provides was such as the Spirit applies. Such blessings do not bear the stamp of "nature's bounty," but are imported solely from the "heavenly places" "in Christ," and are made real to the soul by the Holy Spirit. The high quality of the blessings led the apostle to ascribe high-standing, good repute, "blessed" to God the Father, the Giver.

The revelation of the larger sphere of the blessings the infinite Father "purposed" to bestow in Christ would seem to be the general theme of the epistle. Subject-matter is not new, the infinite reach of the "eternal purpose in Christ," if not wholly new, was at least not understood by the friends and enemies of Jesus. It is conceded that much of the "knowable" was "unknown", when? Then and now!

What were some of the blessings the Father purposed to bestow? What blessings has Jesus by the sacrifice of himself provided? What ministry is the Holy Spirit now executing?

We should expect to find the answer to the foregoing questions in the following verses:

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vv. 4-14. *“Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love; having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved; in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heaven and the things upon the earth; in him I say, in whom we were also made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped in Christ: in whom ye also, having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God’s own possession, unto the praise of his glory.”*

I. The “Good Pleasure” of the Infinite Father is our First Consideration.

Certain facts in this part of the epistle stand out in the clear; facts with which man has had nothing to do; facts that expressed the “good pleasure of God’s will,” fundamentally, without reference to any other consideration.

First, God purposed to establish a spiritual household “before the foundation of the world” v. 4. The establishing of a spiritual family was, we believe, to satisfy the longing of the heart of the infinite Father, “according to the good pleasure of his will,” and his choice of children was made ages before the children, in reality, existed. The children

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were chosen "before the foundation" of the house was laid; the foundation was laid upon the eternal principle of the Cross, the principle of sacrifice and had definite reference to the development of children who would have the spiritual capacity to live in fellowship with their heavenly Father. God himself, is an eternal offering.

Second, God purposed within himself that human beings, "us," Jews and Gentiles would constitute the children of his household. (v. 4; 3:6; Jn. 3:16). It was this age-old purpose of God that caused him, in creation, to place his own "image and likeness" in a frame of clay. (Ge. 1:27; Ps. 103:14). Our limited knowledge of the myriad forms of life forbids us claiming that God chose human beings to be his spiritual children for the reason that he had no other choice. The reason for his choice was in himself. We confess that the wickedness of mankind at its worst, and the mental, moral and spiritual stupidity of mankind at its best forces us to exclaim with the apostle Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" (Ro. 11:33, 34).

The apostle Paul failed to see in the works of Christians God's reason for his choice of spiritual children, but on the contrary, he wrote Timothy that they had been called to "a high and holy calling according to his (God's) own purpose and grace," which was given them "in Christ Jesus before the world began." (11 Tim. 1:9).

Third, God the Father chose human beings to be his spiritual children "in him," in Jesus Christ, v. 4. It had been "predestinated" that Jesus Christ, the Second Person in the Trinity, would do all that would be required to give to human beings "the authority" to become the spiritual children of God. (Jn. 1:12). "In him, in Christ," or its equivalent, is used by the apostle at least twenty-five times

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in this epistle. All the spiritual blessings bestowed by the infinite Father upon his spiritual household, beginning with his choice of spiritual children and carrying them through the stages of redemption "to sit together in heavenly places" are "in Christ." The apostle had in mind the same spiritual household that Jesus referred to when he said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (Jn. 14:6). Christ's "way, truth and life" are equivalent to Paul's "in him." Out of Christ means to be out of the spiritual family of God.

Fourth, The "choice" of God included the sanctification of his spiritual children, "holy and without blame before him," v. 4 "Holy" before God is a positive quality and is required (1 Thess. 4:7; 1 Pe. 1:15, 16); and "without blame before him" is a negative quality and is a necessary part of sanctification. (Jude 24). The subject of scriptural sanctification is treated in another part of these "studies"; here it would seem that the apostle calls attention to the "position" the spiritual children occupy "in Christ"; "In Christ" the Father sees them to be positional saints, holy, sanctified. Thus far in our study we have learned (1) that God the Father purposed within himself to establish a spiritual family; (2) that his spiritual children would consist of human beings; (3) that his spiritual children would be secured "in," or through the mediumship of Jesus Christ; (4) that "in Christ" his children would stand before him "holy and without blame."

Fifth, "In love," discloses the infinite spring of the Father's choice and his plan of redemption, v. 5.

Inasmuch as that which the Father "predestinated" goes back to his original "purpose," including his purpose to establish a spiritual family and the beings chosen and the Medium in whom they were chosen and the ground and means of their "adoption unto himself," it is clear, that "love" was the spring of all that he "ordered before hand"; therefore,

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"in love" stands at the beginning of v. 5. "Predestination" includes all that precedes and all that follows which in any vital way is related to the subject of spiritual children.

Do the high-sounding words, such as "foreordination," "predestination," and "divine decrees" terrify us? Well might we be terrified if it were otherwise. There is nothing wobbly about "the ground of eternal hope." God is not opposed to himself. His eternal decrees do not oppose his infinite love. He has not "foreordained" contrary to his will. What has he willed relative to the salvation of humanity? The apostle Paul gives two very definite answers to the question: (1) In his first letter to the Thessalonians, 5:9, he wrote "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." It must not be claimed that God "appoints" contrary to his "choice." (2) The same apostle in his first letter to Timothy, 2:4, emphatically states that "God will (passive) have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth." (3) The apostle Peter in his second letter, 3:9, affirms that "the Lord is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." It is submitted that these two great apostles have given a correct explanation of Christ's "whosoever" in John 3:16.

II. God the Father in choosing human beings to be his spiritual children assumed the responsibility of providing in full all that would be required to enable them to reach the "divine purpose."

First, It was required that God's natural children become spiritual. v. 3. The apostle makes clear that the blessings provided by the Father in Christ are of such a nature that only the Spirit can apply them to the souls of the members of his household. The apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians (2:14) informed them that the man of nature is incapable of receiving the blessings of the Spirit "because they are spiritually discerned." God being Spirit it was

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required that nature's child become spiritual. One would need more than scales to enter into the life and pleasure of the fishes of the sea. Feathers alone would not qualify man to enjoy the life of a bird.

In the second account of creation (Ge. 2:7) the writer records that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." He was "man; and *man became a living soul.*" As man he was of the "earth earthy." As man he lacked the consciousness of God, the spiritual capacity to sense God, recognize his presence and fellowship with him. It is evident that God did not consider his work of creation completed until he had given to nature's child, man, a new name, namely, "living soul." Before sin made its appearance the first man became a spiritual child through the agency of "breath," the Spirit's birth.

Jesus did not tell Nicodemus that he must be born of the Spirit for the reason that he was a sinner, but because he was nature's man. Nicodemus was an unfinished product. To him Jesus said "that which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of Spirit is spirit." (Jn. 3:6). Nicodemus was a high type of the natural man. Nature and opportunity had been kind to him, but not kind enough; however, they had gone their limit, done their best, but their best had left him a curious, inquiring child of nature, lacking spiritual life and understanding. It is submitted that John 3:3-8, is Christ's exposition of Genesis 2:7.

Second, The need and the means of adoption are "according to the good pleasure of" the Father's will. vv. 5, 6.

In our "Confession of Faith" adoption is made to appear as following the "birth from above," which forces the inquiry, why adopt the child after it is born into the family? We must not lose sight of the fact that Paul in addressing the Romans (8:15) used the word adoption in the Roman sense, and conveyed to them that the Holy Spirit witnessed

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to the spirit of the believer in Christ just what the Roman law required and conveyed, that "the process of legal adoption by which the adopted child became entitled not only to the reversion of the property but to the civil status, to the burdens as well as the rights of the adopter—became as it were, his other self, one with him We have but a faint conception of the force with which such an illustration would speak to one familiar with the Roman practice; how it would serve to impress upon him the assurance that the adopted son becomes, in a peculiar sense, one with the Heavenly Father." (Mervale's *Conversion of the Roman Empire*). It must be understood that the apostle for the time is accepting the Roman's point of view of adoption, that the adopted child of God was not under the dominion of the spirit of one enslaved but possessed by the Spirit that enabled him "to cry, Abba, Father," and to occupy the relation in the family that made him "a joint-heir with Christ." Such was the testimony of the Holy Spirit. The time *when* "the act of God's grace" removed all legal barriers, went through the necessary process of adopting the child, was not, as he wrote, in the mind of the apostle. Believers were given to understand that faith in Christ gave to them a position in the family of God similar to that which was granted to a child adopted into a Roman family. The point in the apostle's mind was *What* "adoption" meant to the believer and not *when* it took place in the plan of the infinite Father.

It is contended by some that "the riches of grace" has provided for nature's child a double entrance into the spiritual family of God—by "birth" and "adoption." As we understand it this is not the case. There is but one single entrance into the spiritual family of God and adoption (if at all) is a necessary preparatory part of it.

In the Scriptures there is a marked difference between the Spirit-born and the children of nature. Jesus said those seeking to take his life were the children of the devil,

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(Jn. 8:48) ; and that "the tares are the children of the wicked one." (Mat. 13:38). Nicodemus learned that there were children of the "flesh" and that there were children of the "Spirit." There is a marked difference between the children of light and the children of this world. (Lu. 16:8). Ephesian believers before their conversion to Christ had been the "children of wrath," (Ch. 2:3), and the Thessalonians were taught to distinguish between the children "of the day" and the children of "the night." (1 Thess. 5:5). From this point of view adoption is necessary if the children of one family are to be transferred to another family, receiving a new name, and sharing the responsibilities and privileges of the new relation. But before sin entered into nature's child the child became spiritual by the "breath of God," the Holy Spirit. This plan and process had been foreordained "before the foundation of the world." Between the child composed of nature's elements, of the "earth earthy," and the child of "the breath of God" no redeemer was needed, no debts had been contracted and there was no spirit of resistance in "man" against God "breathing into his nostrils the breath of life." But when sin entered into the child of nature resistance and rebellion arose and a debt appeared. The debt that appeared could not through mercy be marked paid, forgiven, *until it was paid*. Both justice and love required that the last farthing be paid before the prisoner could be brought forth. That debt to Justice and love, until paid, prohibited the very thought of freedom, justification, and until the debt was paid the "breath of God," the Holy Spirit was barred from the heart of the prisoner. Something more than forgiveness is required to bring the sinful child of the world into the spiritual family of God. Forgiveness is for the child of grace only. (1 Jn. 2:1.)

In the fore-thought and plan of the infinite Father the children of nature had been predestinated "unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the

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pleasure of his will." Jesus, "the beloved," "the only begotten son of the Father," (Jn. 1:18) who "was heir to all things," even begotten sonship itself, had been predestinated to remove all barriers that might stand between human beings and spiritual childhood. Sin appearing in the nature of man having been foreseen was fully provided for through "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8.) Was it not fitting that he, "the heir to all things" (He. 1:2) should remove all barriers inasmuch as that which was to be shared with finite brothers had been solely his own?

Third, The riches of infinite grace provided redemption and the forgiveness of trespasses through the blood of Christ v. 7.

Redemption in the Christian sense means "to rescue from the power of sin and its consequences through the blood of Christ." The very nature of both divine justice and love required full pay, redemption, or the prisoner of sin must die. The "riches of grace" did not provide a quality of forgiveness that would pass over an unpaid debt, but the "riches of grace" provided redemption, the payment of the last "farthing." Sin, a debt, standing in the way of freedom, justification, must be dealt with; the debt must be paid. "There is no sin there." There is no sin here in favor with God. It had been fore-planned that Jesus "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the cross." (1 Pe. 2:24.) It had also been predestinated that Jesus "who knew no sin, be made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5:21.) Jesus *bore* the sin of mankind and Jesus was *made* sin, what next? "But now once in the end of the world hath he (Jesus) appeared to *put away sin* by the sacrifice of himself." (He. 9:26). Jesus *bore* sin. Jesus was *made* sin, Jesus *put away sin*, removing in fact the sins of mankind "as far as the East is from the West." (Ps. 103:12.) Jesus paid all humanity owed to infinite love

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and the law of divine justice. The redemptive price Jesus paid was all-sufficient, abundant. (He. 10:18.) The coin Jesus used was his "blood," he sacrificed himself. (1 Pe. 1:18-20). The blood is the life of the flesh. (Le. 17:11, 14.) Where did Jesus get "the blood-price" he paid for redemption is answered in "study" IV.

That "act of divine grace" which made it possible for the sinner to be "justified" before God (Ro. 5:1) by faith in Jesus Christ, also, by that same "act of grace" made it possible for the alien child, the sinner, to be adopted into the family of God. The "act of grace" that satisfied all moral and legal requirements was one thing, and the experimental evidence of spiritual childhood is another matter, and logically follows regeneration. Divine grace wrought *for* the alien child before the Spirit wrought the miracle of the divine birth *in* the alien child. The sinner being "freely justified" by faith in Jesus Christ, legally qualified for adoption, is in the same relation to God that Adam was before God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

My personal view of "adoption," which seems to be highly probable, is that the apostle Paul used the word "adoption" in the Roman sense in order to impress his readers with the thought of "joint-heirs with Christ." In this sense, "adoption" as a doctrine, has no place in the plan of evangelical salvation; justification by faith in Jesus Christ (Ro. 3:21-26) covers all the ground that needs to be covered to prepare the soul for a spiritual birth, and the soul that is Spirit-born needs nothing farther to give it full spiritual standing as a child and has both the spirit and authority to cry "Abba, Father."

The fullness of the price Jesus paid purchased redemption for the entire human race; he "tasted death for every man." (He. 2:9.) And the quality of the price provided "forgiveness of trespasses." Forgiveness is not offered to "the man of the world;" he is offered redemption, deliverance, upon

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the simple terms of "faith in Christ." The offer of deliverance is brought to his door. The message to him is "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Ac. 16:31). He is commanded to "look and be saved" (Isa. 45:22); "believe on the Son and have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:36).

The offer of "Forgiveness of tresspasses" through "the blood of Christ" is offered to the members of the Father's spiritual family. The apostle John addressed "spiritual children" that if they sinned they had an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ, the righteous. This message was not given to them to encourage sinning, but that "they sin not," but, and if they sinned they were not to despair, but at once confess their sins to their Father, assured that he was faithful and just to forgive their sins, and cleanse them from all unrighteousness. (1 Jn. 1:9). "They were further commanded to walk in the light of God which would enable them to have fellowship one with another," "and the blood of Jesus Christ would cleanse them from all sin." (1 Jn. 1:7). Such was and is the message of grace to the spiritual children of the family of God with reference to the doctrine of the *forgiveness* of sins.

Fourth, The infinite Father, through grace "purposed" the gift and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. v. 13.

Limited as we are in our understanding of God's "whys," nevertheless we can see the imperative need of the Spirit, by which the blessings bestowed by the Father and secured to us by the Son, were to be applied, "*abiding*" with the child. (Jn. 14:16.) Throughout the age of the Church the Holy Spirit is a permanent Presence in the heart of the child, and collectively, in the Church.

Jesus by his life, works, death, resurrection and ascension to the "right hand" of the Father prepared the way for the work of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person in the Holy Trinity. It was expedient that Jesus, after he had finished

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his sacrificial work, return to the Father that the Holy Spirit whom the Father would send in his name might perform in human hearts the greater miracle of grace. The sacrificial work of Jesus had not defeated justice; no, a thousand times *no*, for "God manifest in the flesh" might not do that without dethroning himself! But the age-old question of Job (9:2), "how can man be just before God" is answered by the "gospel of grace," that the redemptive work of Jesus has fully met all the demands of a holy law thereby vindicating the "believer's justified standing before God." (Rom. 3:28; 8:33.)

The Christians of Ephesus had "heard the word of truth (Rom. 10:17), the gospel of their salvation," and having believed (1 Jn. 5:10) the good news, they were prepared for the great miracle of the New Creation by the Holy Spirit, and by that same Spirit, at that time, they had been merged, incorporated, "baptized" into the body of Christ, the Church. (1 Cor. 12:13.) The regenerating and baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit are not mentioned in this chapter, but it is evident that these ministries of the Holy Spirit are included inasmuch as it is the "new man" who is baptized into the body of Christ and is sealed, "closed within," until the redemption of the purchased possession. v. 14. The Holy Spirit is both the Seal and the sealer of that which is "God breathed," the "new creation." And it is the "new creation," that "shall never die" (Jn. 11:26), and it is the "new creation," that which is "begotten of God, that sinneth not." (1 Jn. 5:18.)

Pentecost that marked the beginning of the full and exclusive ministry of the Holy Spirit (Ac. 2:1-4) needed not to have "astonished" the Jews inasmuch as the Spirit had been announced by "promise" v. 13. The promises referred to were those recorded in the Old Testament. (Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Joel 2:28; Zec. 12:10.) In the New Testament Jesus had instructed his disciples of the coming and the

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ministry of the Holy Spirit. (Jn. 14:16, 17.) Now, while the ministry of the Holy Spirit throughout the age of the Church is, in a sense, exclusive, it must be understood that his ministry is also inclusive, in this that he, the Spirit, is the executor of the will of the Father and makes effective the redemptive work of Christ, hence the ministry of the Holy Spirit is the ministry of God the Father and God the Son, the Three in One.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit, his *work, gifts, and fruit*, constitute for the present Church-age "the earnest of the believer's inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." v. 14. "Earnest" means that which is given to bind an agreement, to secure, make sure by a pledge, a foretaste, the lesser, which is now possessed, and of the greater, which is yet to come. The "full inheritance of the purchased possession" will be realized "in the dispensation of the fullness of times."

Fifth, The Infinite Father purposed "according to his good pleasure" that "in the dispensation of the fullness of times he would gather together under one Head all things which are in heaven, and all things which are on earth, even in Christ." vv. 9, 10.

Verses nine and ten are in one sentence. The mystery referred to in the ninth verse is no longer a mystery in the tenth. The fullness of God's purpose in Christ, a fullness "hid in God from the foundation of the world" comes to light through this last apostle, Paul. That which had been hidden, the mystery, was not the gospel of grace but God's purpose with reference to its sphere. A dying Israel had visioned "the gathering of the people" unto Christ. (Ge. 49:10.) The divine purpose with reference to "the gathering of the people" under "one Head" had not been hidden in God, but prejudices of divers kind had blinded the first disciples of Jesus to the great "light" of the human world. (Jn. 8:12.) This part of the apostle's message was not

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“unknowable,” but it was “unknown,” unrealized by the close physical associates of Jesus. (Ac. 10:34; 11:17, 18.) It was by a slow process of spiritual evolution that the first apostles of Jesus were forced against their prejudices to recognize the universality of the gospel of grace. The “gospel according to Paul” (Ro. 2:16) visioned more than the “gathering of the people” unto Christ; his gospel was the glorious news of the “gathering together under Christ” all things “which are in heaven and which are on the earth;” all things animate and inanimate. (Ro. 8:19-23.)

The “dispensation of the fullness of times” when the “gathering together” shall take place is that “period when all the *times* destined to precede it” have been fulfilled, “run out.” Jesus Christ “in the fullness of the time” was born into the world. (Gal. 4:4.) When “the time was fulfilled” Jesus announced to the nation of Israel, “the kingdom of God is at hand.” (Mk. 1:15.) “In due time or when the time was full, Jesus died for the ungodly.” (Rom. 5:6.) All dates, chronological and moral, that are in any way related to redemption are to reach the divine purpose in the “fullness of *times*” when the “gathering together” shall be. When will “times” be fulfilled? When “God who is the steward of all *time*” and *times* shall say, *Now!* (Ac. 1:7).

III. THE “GOOD PLEASURE OF GOD’S PURPOSE” RESPECTING HIMSELF.

First, God has pleased himself.

Finite children who are wholly dependent upon an infinite Father act wisely by informing themselves of the “pleasure” of him upon whom they are dependent. (Ac. 17:25.) God in securing spiritual children acted “according to the good pleasure of his will.” v. 5. The larger sphere of the divine purpose “in Christ,” that which had been “hid in God,” the mystery, “was made known according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself.” v. 9. The

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plan by which the infinite Father “inherited” spiritual children was “according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” v. 11.

In all the foregoing God thought, purposed, chose, planned and executed “according to his good pleasure,” and followed “the counsel of his own will.” Believers are assured an “abundant entrance into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ” for the reason that they enter “according” to the will and pleasure of their heavenly Father. (2 Pe. 1:11.)

Second, God’s choice of spiritual children and his plan of securing them contributes to the “praise of the glory of his grace,” and “to the praise of his glory.”

It is only through the abundant grace of God that finite beings have been “*made*” “accepted in the beloved,” the Son of his love. v. 6. Those who had first trusted, hoped, in Christ; Jewish believers who had “seen Christ’s day afar off, through the promises given to the fathers” offered “praise” to God’s shining excellency, “his glory.” v. 12. In the final consummation of redemption, when the sons of God shall be manifested (Ro. 8:19), and the groans of nature ended (21), God’s excellency will be wonderfully manifested, his glory will receive its highest tribute of praise. v. 14.

Third, God, according to his choice and plan “inherits” spiritual children.

A literal translation of the 11th verse is “Even in him—in whom we were also made an inheritance.” Spiritual children are *made* an inheritance through grace. The apostle Paul had in mind what God’s inheritance or heritage had been under the Old Covenant: “The Lord hath taken you (Israel) . . . to be unto him a people of inheritance.” (Deut. 4:20.) God’s “inheritance” under grace had increased from a nation to include believers of all nations. (Gal. 4:27-31.)

The Holy Spirit recognized the Father’s inheritance *in*

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his children to be of the first importance. The children's inheritance comes later. (Ro. 8:17.)

The "purpose" of God respecting himself is (1) "His good pleasure"; (2) "praise to the glory of his grace" and "praise to his glory;" and (3) an "inheritance" of spiritual children.

Conclusion

1. God by his redemptive plan has exhibited "wisdom and prudence. v. 8. It was a mind of infinite wisdom that conceived the plan of redemption, and had foreordained the execution of his plan by the Holy Spirit. Not by the might of the Ephesians had the merits of Christ's sacrifice been appropriated to them, but by the Holy Spirit. (Zec. 4:6.) God's wisdom had conceived the plan and his prudence led him to give the Holy Spirit to execute it.

2. God's choice of human beings as his spiritual children is "the ground of eternal hope." Man's salvation depends upon submission to God's choice. God has chosen human beings *in Christ* to be his spiritual children. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Ac. 16:31.) "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Ac. 4:12.)

CHAPTER III.

THEME: THE TEACHER BECOMES AN INTERCESSOR.

The infinite Father in our present lesson is entreated to aid His finite children to grasp the import of the redemptive plan and purpose. Chp. 1:15-23.

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; The eyes of your understanding being enlightened that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

The apostle Paul as a teacher had conveyed to Ephesian believers knowledge of the plan and purpose of redemption. Teaching was necessary but not sufficient. The teacher became an intercessor, and the prayer he offered in behalf of his pupils was that they might attain to an intelligent understanding of the contents of the first fourteen verses.

First, The apostle's attitude toward the Ephesian believers

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was appreciative, and toward God thankful. The two attitudes are parts of the same frame of mind. The apostle had heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus and of the logical fruit of that faith which was "love unto all the saints." He did not neglect to give them this word of appreciation, and also that he made mention of them in his prayers. The high point in the scale of human appreciation was reached in the words that he "ceased not to give thanks for them." vv. 15, 16.

Second, The prayer contains five petitions logically joined together. The *first* petition is that God would give unto believers the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God. v. 17.

The operations of the Spirit are in God. We "live, move, and have our being in God." The realization of this truth is part of the mission of the religion of Jesus. God is seen only in God. Christian light is seen only in His light. The light of the candlestick reveals the beauty of the candlestick as well as illuminates the room. The degree of the operation of the Spirit is largely determined by the believer's knowledge of God. It is the function of the Spirit to impart "wisdom," here, general illumination, and special revelation. On entering the room the householder turns on the light, filling the room with light, general illumination, "wisdom." The general illumination (wisdom) enables him to locate the articles in the room, their positions and their relation to each other, special revelation. The advance in the prayer is from the general to the special, from wisdom to revelation, from a room filled with light to a specific object.

The *second* petition is that God would enlighten the eyes of the believer's understanding. v. 18. Lit. "the eyes of the heart." Heart here means the seat of emotions, thought and will. The former petition was objective; the present petition is subjective. A room filled with light would mean nothing to a blind man. Cleopas and his traveling compan-

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ion, on their way to Emmaus, were not physically blind on that great day of the resurrection of Jesus. The stranger who drew near and walked and talked with them was not invisible to their physical sight. His exposition of the scriptures caused their "hearts to burn within them," but the eyes of their understanding were unseeing until he sat with them at meat, and "took bread and blessed, and break, and gave to them. And then their eyes (of their hearts) were opened, and they *knew* him." (Luke 24:31.) It was for the opening of the eyes of "the inner man" the apostle prayed, that the believers of Ephesus might perceive, see, understand, know, what? Three things: *First*, That believers might know "the hope of God's calling," v. 18. God's calling discloses opportunity; in our lesson the opportunity of becoming the spiritual children of God, "holy and without blame before Him." The prayer is that believers might know in experience the thrill, the sentiment, "the hope" that "God's calling" logically awakens.

Second, that believers might "know the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints." v. 18. The infinite Father had inherited Spirit-begotten children through Christ. The prayer is that they (Spirit-begotten children) might see, understand, "know the riches of the glory," the shining excellency of their position as children of God. It is submitted, that the joy of the child in the presence of its father is dependent largely upon the attitude of the father toward the child. How does the infinite Father feel toward His children? It is reasonable to assume that this matter takes precedent. The attitude of some parents toward flesh and blood begotten children is such as to destroy all ground for the enjoyment of fellowship. The pleasure of the position of such children could be found in material inheritance only. Much to be desired would be lacking. The glory of the riches of the child's inheritance is one thing, and the glory of the riches of the father's inheritance in the child is another

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thing, and the apostle prayed that the Ephesian believers might know the latter, "the riches of the glory of the Father's inheritance in the child." How does the infinite Father feel toward His Spirit-begotten children? "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." (Zeph. 3:17). Blessed child resting on the bosom of a singing Father! "Praise God from whom all blessings flow"—worship God and not the blessings!

Third. The apostle prayed that believers "might know what is the exceeding greatness of God's power toward them." v. 19. Two thoughts are implied, first, that believers might know that it was *God's power* that was working in them, and second, that they might have an intelligent understanding of the "exceeding greatness" of that power. As examples of the "exceeding greatness" of God's power, Lit. "the operation of the strength of his might," the apostle cites them (1) to the resurrection of Christ. v. 20; Rom. 8:11; 2nd Cor. 4:14. It was "the operation of the strength of God's might" that was made manifest on the dead body of Christ. (2) The "operation of the strength of God's might" was made manifest when Christ was exalted to "sit at the right hand of God in the heavenly places." v. 20. Man's power had nailed Jesus to the cross, and later sealed his body in a tomb. His present exalted position is accredited to the "operation of the strength of God's might" only. (3) The "operation of the strength of God's might" has put all things in subjection to Christ, "over above all principality, power, might and dominion"; all agencies, organized and unorganized, good and evil. (4) The "operation of the strength of God's might" has given to Jesus a name "that is above every name that is named in this world and in the world to come. v. 21; Col. 1:15-18. (5) The "operation of the strength of God's might" has given Christ to be the

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head of the Church, a living organism, his body. v. 22; Col. 1:18. (6) The "operation of the strength of God's might" has made Jesus Christ sufficient to fill the Church with all things. v. 23; Jn. 1:18; Rom. 11:12; Col. 1:19.

The vital, practical point was that the "operation of the strength of God's might" which had wrought the foregoing was now working in the lives of believers. v. 19.

CHAPTER IV.

THEME: THE SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL LIFE AND THE GROUND OF RECONCILIATION AND PEACE.

The "operation of the strength of God's might" which had raised Christ from the dead, enthroned and glorified him, had by that "operation" affected mankind. The connection, in our present study, is that as the "strength of God's might" had power over the dead body of Christ, in like manner, and by that act human beings were also quickened, both in the purpose of God and also in the consciousness of man.

In our lesson, the apostle contrasts the present state of the Ephesian believers with their past, in order that they might have a keen appreciation of the love and power of redeeming grace.

I. What the Ephesian believers had been in times past.

Ch. 2:1-3, 5. *"When ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein aforetime ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the thoughts, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as the rest . . . even when we were dead through our trespasses."*

First, What the Ephesian believers had been toward God. By nature they had been the children of wrath. v. 3. By nature means that the principle of evil is innate. Wrath means God's holy hatred of sin. The poet has given to the penitent believer the spirit of a holy wrath:

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"I hate the sin that made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast."

Sin is man's enemy. God loves man. God hates with a holy hatred anything that injures the object of his love, man. Besides, God's holy hatred of evil, and his antagonism to it, are essential to his holiness. It is evident that God discerns between man and his sins.

Second, These believers are described as having been "dead through trespasses and sins." vv. 1, 5. This was their natural state in times past. The apostle changes from the third person "ye", meaning the Gentiles, to the first person plural, "we", including the Jews also.

1. Sins are understood to be the general forms of evil. Trespasses are special acts. One is sinning when he cherishes an evil thought: trespassing when he acts out the evil thought. Sin, in this sense, is in the intent; trespass the act.

Jesus represents the father of the prodigal as saying to his elder son, "It is meet that we should make merry, and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again." (Luke 15:32). The death of the prodigal consisted of directing his life away from the love and will of his father. In times past the Ephesians had by thought and act lived in direct opposition to the will of God.

2. "Dead through trespasses and sins" implies that the Ephesians had once been otherwise. Prior to transgression they had been in the love and grace of God. The sin and nature of the first Adam had not stood in the way of the merits of the blood of the second Adam, Jesus Christ. The redemptive work of Jesus covered the entire sin-problem of the human race. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Rom. 4:20). Jesus was introduced "as the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (Jn. 1:29). Death in sin follows trespass; trespass is willful transgression. The infants of Ephesus, and the infants

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of mankind, were under God's saving love and grace. Jesus spake within his redemptive rights when he said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Mat. 19:14). It was after Jesus had said "of such is the kingdom of heaven" that "he laid his hands on them." If there was merit in the act of Jesus it was only to confirm what he had said.

3. The conduct of believers when they were dead in trespasses was four-fold. vv. 2, 3. (1) "They had walked according to the course of this world." (2) "They had walked according to the prince of the power of the air." (3) "They had been dominated by the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (4) "They had thought, talked and planned to accomplish the lusts of the flesh and of the mind." (Rom. 7:15, 18; Jn. 3:19, 20; Mk. 7:21-23; Luke 1:51).

The conduct of the prodigal while "dead" furnishes an example of Paul's description of the conduct, in times past, of the Ephesian believers. "And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have been filled with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him . . . and I perish with hunger." (Luke 15:13-17). The younger son went far from his father's council and will; he walked according to the course of the world; he was controlled by the prince of the power of the air, the public opinion of the people of that country; the spirit of disobedience that governed his associates dominated him, and he thought and planned to gratify the lusts of his flesh and mind with "riotous living." The dead people described by Jesus and Paul did much

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thinking and acting, but their thinking and acting directed their lives away from God.

Second, What the Gentile believers had been relative to the covenant of grace.

Ch. 2:12, 13, 17. *"That at that time ye were without Christ . . . and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: . . ye who sometimes were far off."*

Reference is made to God's covenants with the patriarchs. The promise of the Messiah was the basis of all covenants. The Gentiles were included in the promise, but were strangers to the fact, hence they were not inspired with the hope that spiritual riches awaited them. Further, the Gentiles being ignorant of God's plan that included them, removed them in thought and expectation "far off", both geographically and morally from divine favor and fellowship. Mt. Zion had no inviting attraction for the Gentiles because of their ignorance. That they were included in the covenant of promise is clear from the following Scriptures: Gen. 12:2, 3; Isa. 52:10; Luke 1:79; 2:31, 32; Eph. 3:6; He. 2:9).

The five negatives in the twelfth verse presents a dark background, the background of the Gentile believers. They had been "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," strangers from the covenants of promise," without Christ, "without God and without hope in the world. Without hope logically follows without God in the world. Without God in this world that "lieth in the wicked one," a world of sin and pain, presents a picture more tragical than to be without God in the world that would be sinless and painless!

Third, What the Gentile believers had been in relation to the covenant people.

Ch. 2:11, 14, 15, 19. *"Wherefore remember, that aforetime ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands . . . the middle wall of partition, having abolished*

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in the flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances . . . strangers and sojourners."

1. The Gentiles had been nicknamed Uncircumcision. v. 11. Outwardly, physically, the Gentiles, according to the flesh, had not been marked out for blessing. Circumcision was the covenant *sign*.

2. The Gentiles had been the enemies of the covenant people. vv. 14, 15. The cause of the enmity between Jews and Gentiles was the Mosaic economy. The law of commandments was a national one, given to Israel only. That law and the numerous rites associated with its observance, stood an impenetrable wall between the Jews and Gentiles. It was natural for the Jews with their superior religious advantages to become pompous and boastful in their attitude toward the Gentiles, and it was just as natural for the Gentiles to resent the blatant egotism of the Jews.

It is evident that the Jews had given special attention to the mark of the covenant, and had neglected the *promise* contained in the covenant. All that the Jews had exhibited to the Gentiles was not wheat; much had been chaff, and the ignorant, idolatrous minds of the Gentiles had failed to discern between wheat and chaff; to them it was all chaff.

3. The Gentiles had been alienated from the commonwealth of Israel. v. 12. The apostle had in mind a commonwealth in which both Jews and Gentiles had been at peace with God, and from that commonwealth the Gentiles had become alienated, therefore, they had been without country, citizenship and a divinely administered economy; sojourners without the rights of citizenship. v. 19. The Gentiles *then* were much like the Jews *now*. The human race, thus far in its history, presents the picture of children teetering.

The apostle does not tell us when the ideal commonwealth, from which the Gentiles became alienated, existed. It has been suggested that it existed in "the choice of God," or

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that the apostle had access to a period of time, the record of which is lost to us. It is submitted, that the apostle had in mind the family of Noah and the generations immediately following.

4. The spirit of nationalism gave added strength to the wall of enmity between the Jews and Gentiles. The wall was too high to be scaled; its foundation too deep to be tunneled under, and it was too strong to be overthrown by the hand of man. Can that wall be abolished?

II. WHAT THE BELIEVERS OF EPHESUS HAD BECOME THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF GRACE: THEIR PRESENT STATE.

Ch. 2:1, 5, 6, 8-10, 13-22. *"And you did he quicken . . . quickened us together with Christ . . . and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus: . . . for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory. For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them. But now in Christ Jesus . . . are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the twain one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and he came and preached peace to you who were afar off, and peace to them that were nigh; for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father . . . and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple*

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in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit."

First, What the Ephesian believers had become toward God.

The attitude of the soul toward God is the determining point. The access of God to the soul precedes the access of the soul to God. Through "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world" God had access to man, but man being ignorant of the voice and manifestations of God, and not desiring to retain God in his knowledge, became the enemy of God, and surrendered himself to live for the lusts of the flesh and of the mind. It dare not be said that the death of Christ on the cross wrought any change in the love and will of God toward man, but the death and resurrection of Jesus made possible and effectual a radical change in the attitude and will of man toward God. In the death of Jesus, God *commended* his love toward sinners. (Rom. 5:8.)

1. Through the blood of Christ the Ephesians had been brought nigh to God, brought under the covenant of grace. v. 13.

The Gentiles who were far off, (v. 17) and the Jews who according to the flesh were nigh, were brought into a condition of salvation "through the blood of Christ." The blood of Christ placed the far off soul and the soul that was nigh on equal footing, placing both at the door of life, the door that could be entered by faith.

2. The Ephesian believers had been quickened, made alive to live. vv. 1, 5.

The resurrection of Jesus was both the ground of the quickening and the initial quickening itself. Ellicott says, "What God wrought in Christ he wrought, ipso facto, in all who are united with him." The quickening of the believer took place in the purpose of God before the foundation of the world, and in the sacrificial work of Jesus when God

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raised him from the dead, and in the experience of the believer when he believed. (Col. 2:13; 3:1.)

But even before the believer exercised faith unto life there was the consciousness of a quickening, the smothered stirring of the child un-born. This latter sense of "quickenings" has ever been universal. The human race has ever given evidence of being incurably religious. The persistent and combined forces of evil have not been able to destroy man's sense of a Supreme being or beings, and a sense of obligation to the Supreme being or beings. The dead "through trespasses and sins" could not quicken themselves. The supposed "marred image" in a soul dead to God could not quicken itself. The dead are at the mercy of God, must be acted upon. Even the dead body of Jesus did not raise itself. The apostle John throws light on the situation by affirming that "there was the true light, *even the light which lighteth every man as he cometh into the world.*" (1:9.) And it was the resurrection from the dead of the "true light," Jesus Christ, that caused the soul-nature of the entire race to stir. The tapor of the soul is lighted as it "cometh into the world." And inasmuch as God had foreordained his plan of redemption, the sacrificial offering of Jesus "as a lamb slain from the foundation of the world," affected the race from its beginning, and shall continue its effect on the human race to the end of its earthly existence. Neither centuries past, nor centuries to come can affect the merits of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ! The soul must respond to the quickening or sink into a state of permanent death. (Isa. 55:6-11; Ezek. 18:20-24.)

3. Believers have been raised up with Christ, and made to sit in the heavenly places with him. v. 6.

In the purpose of God and in the sacrificial work of Jesus, the three blessings, quickened, raised up, and made to sit with Christ in the heavenly places, are included in the one purpose and act of sacrifice, but in the experience of the

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believer there is a distinction based upon a difference between quickened and raised up. God has made the first move, given the inner sense of obligation, but not all who have been convicted, quickened, have responded.

Doctrinally, the human nature of Jesus, the second Adam, was not different from the nature of the first Adam. "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren . . . to make propitiation for the sins of the people." (Heb. 2:16, 17.) At no time, in his sacrificial work, was Jesus detached from the nature of man. What Jesus did *for* human nature Jesus did *with* human nature. The sacrificial work of Jesus was substitutional *with* man *for* man. "It becometh us," said Jesus to John the Baptist, "to fulfill all righteousness." "All righteousness' was fulfilled by Jesus with the nature of man. The link that joined the "Word made flesh" to flesh was forged in nature's birth. The Word that was made flesh, that was born of woman, that was born under the law, was called Jesus the Son of Man. Therefore, the sacrificial work of Jesus was for his own sake, his own sake included the sake of mankind. Mankind separated from Jesus could not have redeemed itself; no more could the "Word," according to the Father's plan, separated from the nature of mankind have wrought redemption. As it was, Jesus took human nature into baptism; Jesus took human nature into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; Jesus took human nature into all his works of mercy; Jesus took human nature into the midnight of Gethsemane; Jesus took human nature to face the mob, and to stand before the cruel judgment of unjust men; Jesus took human nature to the cross and into death; Jesus took human nature into the under world; Jesus brought human nature up in the resurrection, and Jesus carried human nature to the right hand of God, in the heavenly places! Jesus with "human nature made perfect through

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suffering" (Heb. 2:10; 5:7-9) paid it all, but Jesus used human coin "made perfect" to pay the debt. Human nature had sinned, and human nature must pay; in Jesus human nature paid.

4. Gentile believers were reconciled to God and Christian Jews, and Christian Jews were reconciled to God and believing Gentiles "by the cross." vv. 14-17.

a. The cause of the enmity between Jews and Gentiles, and the cause of the enmity between Jews and Gentiles and God, both causes were removed by the sacrificial offering of Jesus. Jesus was their peace man-ward and God-ward. Jesus was not their "peace-shower," but he was their peace *itself*. Jesus was the point of union between Jew and Gentile, and Jesus was the point of union between Jew and Gentile and God. The believing Jew saw in Jesus the believing Gentile no longer as a Gentile, but as a brother, and the believing Gentile saw in Jesus the believing Jew no longer as a Jew, but as a brother, and God saw in Jesus believing Jew and Gentile as his spiritual children, and the believing Jew and Gentile saw in Jesus God their heavenly Father.

The ground of all enmity was abolished by Jesus fulfilling all the requirements of a holy law. (v. 15). This Jesus did by obeying the law and by being made a curse, that he might redeem those who were under the curse of the law. (Gal. 3:13). Jesus by his sacrifice became the end of the law, so far as the curse was concerned, for righteousness unto all believers. (Rom. 10:4). The law which had given believers knowledge of sin, and because of sin condemned them, became their tutor to lead them to Christ that they might be justified by faith. (Gal. 3:24).

The enmity referred to in the sixteenth verse was of a more deadly type, if that were possible, and that enmity was "slain." On the one side it was the enmity of the "old man" (Rom. 6:6) against God, and on the other side was the

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divine displeasure against sin. The "old man" cried, "peace, peace, but there was no peace." The moral government of God did not surrender to the government of the world, nor was there a compromise effected; and yet, God issued a proclamation of peace on earth; a proclamation of peace in perfect accord with a holy law, a law that was both satisfied and exalted, through the blood of Christ.

b. The reconciliation effected by the sacrificial work of Jesus of both Jews and Gentiles unto God *was in one body*. (v. 16). "In one body" was an essential part of the reconciliation. The Jews were not reconciled to God and merged into Christ a Jewish body; neither were the Gentiles reconciled to God and merged into Christ a Gentile body. Changing the figure, there was one fold and one shepherd. (Jno. 10:16). The reconciliation was not brought about by the Jews becoming Gentiles, nor by the Gentiles becoming Jews, but by both Jews and Gentiles, the "twain," being created "one New Man." v. 15.

It was the "new man," a corporate body, made up of those who had been Jews and Gentiles, who now had access unto the Father by "one Spirit." v. 18. The approach of a Gentile to God was not the approach of a Gentile as a Gentile, but the approach of a new creature, and as such he was no longer a stranger or a foreigner, but a fellow citizen with the saints of all time, and still nearer and more intimate a member of "the household of God." v. 19.

c. The apostle now uses the figure of a building, pointing out the two-fold thought: (1) That the New Man's foundation, source of being, was Jesus Christ, the same foundation that was being used by the apostles and the New Testament prophets. (1 Cor. 3:11). (2) The Ephesian believers are represented as "living stones," builded into the temple of God, and that Jesus was the "chief corner stone." vv. 20-22. The "chief corner stone" gave plan and form to the buliding, and the place and position of the believers

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of Ephesus would, therefore, be determined by the "chief corner stone."

5. The Ephesian Believers were saved. v. 8.

"For by grace are ye saved . . and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God . . . Not of works."

1. "For by grace are ye saved" removed all possibility of salvation having in any sense been of themselves. In an absolute sense salvation was God's gift to them. Further, it would have been vain for them to have sought in themselves a meritorious reason for the gift of salvation. In themselves, by the light of the gospel, they could have discovered their need of salvation, but the grace-reason was in God, "who being rich in mercy, because of his great love wherewith he had loved them," constituted the source of the gift. (v. 4). God in the richness of his mercy had conceived the gift; Jesus by his sacrificial work had wrought out the plan, and the Holy Spirit had applied the gift, saving them.

2. "For by grace are ye saved . . . Not by works," removed all possibility of salvation being by works. v. 9.

The believers addressed had been created in Christ Jesus unto good works and the field of their activities had been providentially arranged. v. 10. Good works are only second to salvation. Salvation is the mother; good works are the children. The children do not produce the mother, but they prove that the mother exists. Blessed is the soul that finds its place in the plan of God and fills it!

3. Salvation was made effective to believers through faith. v. 8. God had saved believers at his own cost. They had contributed nothing. For them to have done so would have detracted from the merits of Christ's sacrifice. Even their faith in him who had died and risen again had added nothing to the merits of his offering. But faith in the efficacy of Christ's sacrificial work was required. Faith

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appropriates the remedy provided, the remedy was Christ *the* ransom, the Saviour.

4. The riches of God's mercy were to be shown through the ages coming on, in God's kindness through Jesus Christ. v. 7.

The history of the organized church fails to furnish the mind a satisfactory reason why and how it has been perpetuated. Both the church and the gospel have suffered most at the hands of their friends. Inside the organized church and outside the organized church a force mightier than the might of man has been exercised to keep alive the body of Christ in the world. The kindness of God has not failed. Centuries of ignorance, superstition, perversions and false teachings have not clogged the channel of "abounding grace." The riches of God's mercy, disclosing his infinite kindness through Jesus Christ, in our day, in diversified ways and manner, are reaching through human agencies the uttermost parts of the earth with healing and saving grace! There will be no letting "down" on God's part "through the ages coming on!"

CHAPTER V.

THEME: THE MYSTERY AND ITS FELLOWSHIP.

In the third chapter the apostle continues the discussion of the subject introduced in the first and carried through the second chapter, namely, the purpose of the Infinite Father respecting Jews and Gentiles. That part of the epistle which treats of God's choice including the Jews caused no surprise to them; the Jews believed themselves chosen, but that part of the epistle which disclosed that the Gentiles were also chosen to be "fellow-members of the body" on terms of equality with the Jews, caused an "uproar" among the later, and was the primary cause of the apostle's arrest and imprisonment.

I. The Revelation of the Mystery.

vv.-3-12. "How that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in a few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which from all ages hath been hid in God who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the

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the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord; in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him."

First, The Mystery was made known by Revelation. v. 3.

The apostle takes no credit to himself for clearing up a certain "eternal purpose which had been hidden in God from all ages;" he had received it by revelation. The mystery had been made known to him and to the other apostles and prophets "by the Spirit." v. 5. The full import of the Spirit's revelation seems to have been better understood by the apostle Paul than by the other apostles. In this connection it is well to bear in mind that the "Lordship" of Jesus is made known to the consciousness of believers by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Logically, we should expect the babe that was conceived of the Holy Spirit (Mat. 1:18; Lu. 1:35) would by the Spirit be revealed to Simeon. (Lu. 2:25-31). Furthermore, that Simon Peter did not discover the Messiahship of Jesus through physical contact, but by "revelation." (Mat. 16:17). By what agency shall the members of the body of Jesus "call him Lord?" (1 Co. 12:3).

Second. The meaning of mystery in the New Testament.

A kindred word is initiated, "instructed." (Phil. 4:12). "Initiated" is a term derived from the induction of persons into pagan mysteries. Ignatius called the Ephesian believers "fellow-initiates" with Paul. They were students of "things hidden."

In the New Testament mystery has three meanings: (1) It means something which had been hidden, but is now made known. (Mat. 13:11; 1 Co. 2:9). (2) Mystery means Christ himself. (Ep. 3:3, 4; 1 Tim. 3:16). (3) Mystery implies the admission of Gentiles to membership in the Church; to all gospel privileges on equal terms with the Jews. v. 9. (Rom. 16:25; 1 Co. 2:7-9; Col. 1:27;

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2:2; 4:3). That the Gentiles were included in the covenant of promise had been made known by the prophets. (Ge. 12:3; Ps. 22:27; 86:9; Isa. 9:2; 49:6; 60:3; Mal. 1:11). That the Gentiles were ignorant of the fact did not change the "eternal purpose and promise." While the prophets had foretold that God's choice included the Gentiles they had not made clear that the Church would be a new creation, and that Jews and Gentiles would be admitted on the same terms. This truth was made known to the apostles by revelation "in the Spirit." v. 5; (Ac. 15:6-11). The old things which had passed away included things Jewish as well as things Pagan. (II Cor. 5:17). Jesus had not sacrificed himself to improve Judaism, but that those who according to the flesh were Jews and those who according to the flesh were Gentiles would have the privilege of becoming a "new creation," and as such be merged into the same body by the same Spirit (1 Co. 12:13) and enjoy the unity of "fellow-heirs, fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." v. 6.

Why any part of the foregoing was hidden in God, concealed from the knowledge of man, is not clear to us. The apostle's reply to the inquiry is, "that God who created all things" has the right to conceal and reveal as he wills.

It was not welcome news to the Jews that their long-looked for Messiah, who, instead of leading them forth into a war of extermination against their enemies, had through the sacrificial offering of himself become the point of contact, union, between them and their enemies. Just here, attention is directed to that still larger purpose of God, who fore-ordained Jesus Christ to be the "main point" around which all things on earth, animate and inanimate, and all things in heaven, in the fullness of time will be gathered "together in one." (ch. 1:10).

A striking part of the mystery which had been hidden in

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God was the revelation that "principalities and the powers in heavenly places" would learn the significance of the redemptive work of Christ, and that these angelic organizations in time would have revealed to them "the manifold wisdom of God" through the Church. The apostle Peter represents the angels as looking sideways, "desiring to look into" the meaning of redemption and the new body which had been created, the Church.

Angelic interest in human redemption is thought to be the result of the part they are to take in the dispensation of the Church. Angels brought to earth the glad tidings of the Saviour's birth. (Lu. 2:10). Angels have been commissioned to minister to the heirs of salvation. (He. 1:14). In crisis hours angels have proven to be most helpful. (Ac. 5:19; 8:26; 27:23). Does the foregoing fully explain the interest angels have in redemption and the Church? (See Note, a).

Third, The Fellowship of the Mystery. v. 9.

Jesus had said to the disciples in his last heart to heart talk with them that he had many things yet to make known to them, but at that time they were not prepared to receive them. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." (Jn. 16:12, 13). The Spirit had come, and the "time was full" for the Spirit to make known through the apostle Paul some of the things the disciples had not been "able to bear" while Jesus was with them in the flesh. One of the points that had been hidden in God, but is now made known is the "fellowship of the mystery," the larger purpose and unity of the Church. The R. V. has "dispensation of the mystery." The Holy Spirit used Paul to show how the mystery had been dispensed; concealed for ages and is at last revealed. In the margin of the revised version is the word "stewardship." It would seem that for an ordered period of time, the Church, a corporate body, is to exhibit a unity, a fellowship in the

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Spirit, that will eliminate the possibility of a schism, (1 Co. 1:13), and for this ordered period of time, the Church by its various activities, as a faithful "steward" will make known to angels and all men the "manifold, variagated, many colored wisdom of God."

It is evident, that the Church in prosecuting its mission of witnessing of Jesus in all parts of the world, is revealing more and more, the "manifold wisdom of God." The Church by gathering to itself every type of mankind, every degree of intelligence, every grade of sinner, and by employing many agencies of training, endeavoring to fit all its members for service, is showing forth the "manifold wisdom of God." The faith of the members of the body in Jesus, the head, is expressing itself by responding to calls for help of every kind coming from all parts of the world, and out of the richness of that faith and love, the Church is seeking "to heal the open sore of mankind," thereby disclosing the "manifold wisdom of God." The services of the Church must be as multiple as are the needs of mankind. In its rich treasure stores are healings for the sick, food for the hungry, water for the thirsty, clothes for the naked, homes for orphans and the aged, missionaries for the benighted, teachers for the untutored, strength for the weak, good cheer for the oppressed, a balm for the broken hearted, rest for the weary, sympathy and friendship for the forsaken, "songs in the night" for the children of sorrow, hope for the despairing, under-shepherds for scattered flocks, brothers for all men, mothers for all children and the message of eternal salvation for all the world! How manifold is the wisdom of God!

The "stewardship" of the Church man-ward is not the whole of its exalted ministry. The Church has a mission heaven-ward; in this, that God has chosen the Church as his instrument to make known to the angelic hosts of heaven his "manifold wisdom." The position of the Church—how ex-

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alted! The message and ministry of the Church—how far reaching!

Fourth. The Nucleus of the General Theme of the Epistle. vv. 8-12.

“To the intent that now ‘(10)’ according to the eternal purpose which he (God), purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (11). The apostle had been used by the Holy Spirit to lift the veil revealing more of the “eternal purpose” than had hitherto been made known. And it was this further and clearer revelation of the “eternal purpose” that constituted the “nucleus” of the epistle. This fuller revelation of “the eternal purpose in Christ Jesus” includes “foreordination,” “predestination,” “choice,” “redemption,” the Church, its unity, membership and their exalted character, position and duties,” and that wider sweep of infinite purpose that sees in Jesus the “key to a cosmic philosophy, embracing in redemption all ages and all worlds.” Dismiss from the apostle’s mind “the fuller purpose of the infinite Father as revealed by Jesus and later by the Spirit of the gospel of grace and the letter will fall into fragments, wanting unity. The apostle’s position was so daring, so revolutionary and contrary to Jewish expectation and ambition, that in the mind of the Spirit, the time had come for the chosen messenger of the “gospel of grace” to assign a reason for his message that antedated Moses, Abraham and Adam himself, extending back into the council of the ages, even before the foundation of the world. The gospel of grace was not a recent invention, but its fulness and sweep was a recent revelation.

Fifth. The apostle’s message to the Gentiles was “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” v. 8. “Unsearchable” means that which can not be searched. The “unsearchable riches of Christ” can be known by revelation only. The “unsearchable riches of Christ” that the apostle preached to the Gentiles had been made known to him by the Spirit,

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and it gave to Gentile believers privileges equal to the Jews, on the same terms. Believing Gentiles through the revealed "riches of Christ" were "fellow-members of the body of Christ." It was especially the doctrine of the "one body" that the Judaistic section of the Church fought in the days of the apostle. "All previous distinctions of character, culture, creed, nationality, and all varieties of dispensational privileges and theocratic merits were obliterated"; for there was no schism in the body of Christ. The Judasitic section of the Church would have admitted Gentiles as "fellow-members," tolerated their presence in the body, if they had been admitted through a Jewish door, such as receiving the "mark of the old covenant."

Or had the apostle offered to the Gentiles an inferior position in the body of Christ, catered to a Jewish disposition to look down on the Gentiles, he could have saved himself from prison. We entertain a profound appreciation for this matchless servant of Jesus, "a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee, "who never deviated an iota from the gospel of equal privileges, whether Jews or Gentiles; that gospel of grace that made Gentile believers "fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers in the promise in Christ through the gospel," and had granted to Gentiles boldness and access to the Father's favor through faith in Jesus Christ. (vv. 6, 12). It was the apostle's unfaltering courage and unwavering devotion to Christ that brought down upon him the wrath of the leaders of his nation. Of a truth he could write, I Paul, the prisoner for you Gentiles.

Sixth. Humility was a crowning characteristic of the apostle Paul. "Unto me '(such as I)' who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given"—v. 8. The apostle ever felt himself unworthy of the position to which he had been called, especially as the apostle to the Gentiles. This estimate of himself was the result of his former opposition

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to the Church (Ac. 22:4; 26:11), and doubtless forced upon him the "feeling" that it was not "meet" to call him an apostle, but since he was so "called"; let it be understood that he was "the least of the apostles." (1 Co. 15:9). Such, it is submitted, is the confession of greatness.

But in our lesson the apostle declares himself to be "less than the least of all saints," believers. What have we here? Has the apostle gone too far? It must be conceded that the "least" saint was very weak, and the apostle places himself below the weakest! Doubtless, he reached that point in littleness, weakness, in himself that he became girded with the strength of Christ! He confessed that when he was weak then was he strong. (2 Co. 12:10). Was it that keen sense of "less than the least," a profounder sense of "littleness" than that which was shared by the least of believers, that has given to him an indestructable earthy immortality?

We fail to find in the apostle's confession any hint of a sinister fleshly, lustful demon lurking in his flesh or in his disposition, tripping him now and again. The apostle's keen consciousness of the depth of in-bred sin, the source of rebellious thoughts in his own nature, forced upon him the "feeling" that he was "less than the least" of all believers; especially did this "feeling" possess him as he contrasted his estimate of himself with his exalted conception of Christ and the Church, and the special work to which he had been called. Now the apostle has made *his* confession: it is proper that all other saints make *their* confessions!

II. The Cause for which the apostle Paul was a prisoner in Rome:

Ch. 3:1, 2. *"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward."*

First. 1. The cause of the apostle's imprisonment was

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that of building Jews and Gentiles into one body on equal terms, the terms of the gospel of grace. He attributes his apostleship to the Gentiles to the grace of God. (2). At the time of his conversion to Christ he received his call to be the bearer of the gospel to the Gentiles. (Ac. 9:15). One less devoted to Jesus than Paul, by the light of his experience, would doubtless, have thought and written of his call as a judgment instead of a God given favor. "In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one, thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness . . . In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands." (2 Co. 11:23-33).

An aged couple, parishioners of mine, one for ten years and the other for more than twenty years, when called on for assistance, such as praying, testifying, giving, teaching, and visiting the sick, never failed to mention that such calls and opportunities were gratefully embraced by them as special evidences of God's grace. Surely, theirs was the right point of view. But it is evident that Paul had reached a much higher point of view, a point of view too seldom attained by the servants of Christ.

Second. The apostle writes of himself as being "the prisoner of Christ Jesus. v. 1.

What right did the apostle have to so closely identify

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Jesus with himself? It was Jesus who was responsible for Paul's conversion; Paul had not converted himself. (Ac. 9:4-6. It was Jesus who was responsible for Paul's apostleship to the Gentiles; Paul had not commissioned himself. (Ac. 9:15). It was Jesus who was responsible for the message the apostle preached to Jews and Gentiles; he had not manufactured the message. (Gal. 1:11, 12). Paul could truthfully write that what he was he was by the grace of God. (1 Co. 15:10).

In the mind of Paul there was still a profounder sense of union with Christ. At the time of his conversion he learned that while he was persecuting the followers of Jesus, he was, in reality, persecuting Jesus himself. (Ac. 9:4, 5). Jesus is never detached from the believer. Jesus is the vine; believers are the branches. (Jn. 15:5). Jesus is the head of the body; believers are members of his body. It was part of the body of Jesus that was in a Roman prison. In a very real sense the apostle had lost his identity in Christ. The union between Jesus and the prisoner was so real and vital that the prisoner was enabled, in the Spirit, to pen one of the most magnificent writings ever penned by the hand of inspiration—this epistle to the Ephesians!

Conclusion:

The apostle sent to the Ephesians a word of warning and great comfort: "Wherefore I ask that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which are your glory." v. 13. This request contains two expressions that sets forth the thought of extreme suffering: (1) "My tribulations"; a word conveying the idea of intense and long-continued suffering, and (2) "that ye faint not," do not lose heart as if evil had conquered. Jesus had told his disciples that abounding iniquity would cause the love of many to wax cold. (Mat. 24:12).

There is implied in the warning the danger of "fainting" through sympathetic suffering. It may have been long con-

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tinued sympathetic suffering that influenced Job's wife to advise him "to curse God and die." (Job. 2:9). Have the tribulations of the servants of Jesus, the cruel martyrdom of missionaries and the tragical oppositions to the cause of righteousness led many good-intentioned people to cry, "What is the use?" "To faint," fall by the wayside?

The Ephesian believers were not to feel too badly because of his (the prisoner) "tribulations" for them. There was another side to the situation—the *glory side*. The "shining excellency" of the apostle's dignified office fell on them. Gentile believers were sharing with Paul his sufferings, through sympathy, and now it was their right through grace to share with him the "glory" of his apostleship to them. Sufferings *and glory*! Is this the message the martyred missionaries of China, Africa and India sends back to the Church of Christ on earth? And there is still the greater "glory"! (Ro. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:11, 12).

Note a. The interest angels have in redemption, in addition to that which may be called a normal interest, is that further interest suggested by three church-age statements recorded in Ep. 1:10; 2 Pe. 3:13; Jude v. 6. In the first, the unifying of all things in heaven implies discord at some time among the *inhabitants* of heaven. In the second, the apostle Peter quotes Isa. 65:17, and refers to the *place*. In Revelation, the first heaven and earth had passed away, and it was a new heaven and a new earth that had appeared in which righteousness is to *dwell*. (Rev. 21:1). Did righteousness fail to *dwell* in the first heaven? Who were the sinners? Jude informs us of "angels which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation," and that God "hath kept them in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." We conclude, that angels under the leadership of Lucifer caused discord in heaven, marred its beauty and perfection, hence the need of a new heaven.

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The angels which are "kept in everlasting bonds unto the judgment of the great day," it would seem that their bonds are not to endure forever and ever: that "everlasting" refers to a *definite* period of time, namely, "unto the judgment of the great day." What then? Will the Judge pronounce upon them a severer sentence or give them a *chance* to return to their "proper habitation?" Inasmuch as God's ability is above all we can ask or think, are fallen angels beyond his "eternal purpose" and redemptive power? May it be that the "variagated wisdom of God" revealed through the Church to the "principalities and powers of heaven" disclosed to them a message of hope for their fallen comrades? The angels who "left their first estate," and man who "left his first estate" will be given a chance to return through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Does the stewardship of the Church reach beyond our little world! Surely. Is the interest of angels in the message of redemption personal? Why not? Think of the majesty of Christ and his Church!

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let *angels* prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all!"

CHAPTER VI.

THEME: THE APOSTLE'S PRAYER FOR THE CAUSE.

Ch. 3:14-19. *"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man: That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."*

The apostle having digressed returns to the cause for which he was a prisoner. v. 1. He had fully met the requirements of a teacher as far as it was possible for language to convey to human minds the purpose of God concerning Jews and Gentiles, jointly, the Church enjoying gospel privileges. Here, as in the first chapter, the teacher became the intercessor, recognizing that the deep things of the Spirit could only be fully understood by finite children aided by the Holy Spirit. Especially, did Jews and Gentiles who had been merged into one body need the "richer grace" of God. Although, they were relatively rich in grace as to their position in Christ, yet when compared with "the riches in Christ" which had been prepared for them and were ready and waiting for them, they were comparatively poor. The apostle prayed that they be brought into contact with "the richer stores of grace."

a. "For this cause I bow my knees," v. 14. "The cause" was that of building Jews and Gentiles together in one

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body. "I bow my knees" implies careful thought and preparation. Paul approached God with reverence and with the solemnities the importance of the request required.

b. *"I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,"* vv. 14, 15. The apostle referred to the family as a whole, part in heaven and part on earth. God the Father had obligated Himself, according to His plan of redemption, to supply all the needs of His children. Paul the intercessor offered no prayer in behalf of those members of the family who had departed from the earth-life, but he interceded for those on earth, the exposed and tempted part of Gods family.

c. *"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory,"* v. 16. It must not be overlooked that the "grants" were not to be given according to the desires of the petitioner, Paul, nor according to the character of the recipients, Ephesian believers, but "according to the riches" of God's shining excellency. God's standard of giving is the standard of grace, abundant, all-sufficient, overflowing.

I. The Prayer for the Cause. vv. 16-19.

The *first* petition is that the believers of Ephesus be strengthened with might by God's Spirit "in the inner man." v. 16.

"Might" means a faculty not manifest, and is appropriate to the phrase "the inner man." "There is the outward man, and there is the inward man, the moral I." (2nd. Cor. 4:16). The apostle Peter calls the "inner man" the hidden man of the heart." (1st. Pe. 3:4). The "hidden man of the heart" is renewed and strengthened by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit uses his own sword, the word of God which "is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things

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are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (He. 4:12, 13).

Ephesian believers could order, with a degree of success, their outward conduct to conform to certain standards of Christian society, but of themselves they could not control the "inner man" of faith, trust, patience, humility and love. In the realm of their weakest point, "the inner man," the Holy Spirit would be strength and give strength. There is in essence a likeness between the "inner man" and the Holy Spirit.

The *second* petition is that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith. v. 17. Dwell means to take up permanent abode, settle down. The thought is that the believer is the habitation of God, and collectively the Church. (Ch. 2:22). The strengthening is to the end that Christ be retained in the heart. Christ dwells where his mind is; Christ dwells where his spirit is. (Phil. 2:5; Rom. 8:9). Christ dwelling in the heart means that the believer has a sense of pardon and freedom, and that his will is being moulded by a divine will, and that his emotions are being guided and controlled by the enthroned Master. One has said "Christ dwelling in the heart acts as the purifying agent of the springs of principle and action." Those who seek to have "their spiritual strength renewed" should know that the end of the "strengthening" is that Christ may dwell in their hearts.

Christ is received and retained in the heart "by faith." Christ would not, can not, be received and retained in the heart through sacrifices or by reason of "good works." But the faith that admits Christ and retains him in the heart makes sacrifices, and the faith that admits Christ and retains him in the heart "performs good works."

The *third* petition sets forth the logical result of the two preceding petitions, or the two preceding petitions makes possible being "rooted and grounded, in love." "In love" is

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emphatic. The apostle used two figures, that of a tree, "rooted," and that of a building, "grounded," conveying the ideas of source, growth and solidity. Strengthened to the point of Christ dwelling in their hearts would enable them to realize that the root of their faith, hope, love and life was not running at large seeking nourishment from the theories and philosophies of men, but was firmly fastened in Him who in the essence of His being "is love." (1st John 4:16). In the second figure, believers had been builded into a temple of which Jesus Christ was the foundation. (Ch. 2:22); 1st Co. 3:11). Infinite love that had given Jesus to be the foundation of the habitation of God, had also, builded believers into that habitation: in short, believers were the offspring of eternal love, and their "growth into the richer graces of redemption," and a firmer sense of security could only be realized, experienced, "in love."

The *fourth* petition is made possible by answers to the three preceding petitions. "May be made strong to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height," v. 18. That which was to be comprehended, spiritually visioned, was open to all saints. God had not decreed that some believers could comprehend it and others could not. All believers could "comprehend," spiritually vision, a certain measurement, but it would be necessary for such believers to be "strengthened" by the Spirit in the "inner man" to the degree of retaining Christ in their hearts "by faith," and of being "rooted and grounded in love" to be able to "comprehend the breadth, and the length, and the depth and height," of what? *That love which was the spring of all their blessings*, in which they were "rooted and grounded," the love which is *God Himself*. (1st John 4:16). The breadth of God's love comprehends the world of mankind. (John 3:16). The length of God's love is everlasting. (Jer. 31:3). The depth of God's love is revealed by the human beings who have been delivered from

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pagan lusts, superstitions and diabolical idolatries, and of extending down "into the under world." (1st Pe. 3:18-20; 4:5, 6). The height of God's love is to be visioned by that which it has done for the Head of the body, exalted him to a position "above all heavens," and when his body is complete it will be exalted to join its savior, its head. (John 14:3; 17:24; 1st Co. 15:23; 1st Thess. 4:17). The breadth, and length, and height, and depth of infinite love and that which that love has wrought and provided for humanity is to be understood, realized in experience, by all believers.

The *fifth* petition is that Ephesian believers might know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. v. 19. In the preceding petition the magnitude of the "riches of grace," the provisions infinite love had made for all mankind was to be comprehended, fully realized, corresponding with the first petition in his former prayer (Ch. 1:17), that God would give the Ephesians "the Spirit of wisdom," general illumination, filling the whole area with light, enabling the believer to get a correct survey of the whole to the end of seeing clearly a particular object. In like manner, in this prayer, the apostle moves from the general, the magnitude of infinite love, to the particular, that they "might know the love of Christ" to them. Of what experimental advantage would it have been to them to have been able to comprehend the magnitude of infinite love and the provisions offered through redemption, and then failed to undertsand, "spiritually discern" (1st Cor. 2:12-16), Christ's love to them? The love of Christ to them could not be known by mental processes, but through experience only. We have heard the penitent believer exclaim "How wonderful? Jesus loves me!" The vastness of divine love has its place in the comprehension, spiritual vision, of the believer, and the love of Christ to him, in him, has its place in his experience!

The *sixth* petition is that "they might be filled with all

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the fullness of God.” v. 19. This petition is the climax and includes all that precedes. Finite things do not have the capacity to contain the fullness of an infinite being, but finite beings who through Jesus Christ have been “renewed in righteousness and holiness after the image of him who created them” may be filled to the extent of their capacity with the fullness which is of God. New creatures are susceptible “of such conformity to God.” In Christ dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. (Col. 2:9). Members of Christ’s body are to be filled with the same *kind* of fullness. Gentile believers of Ephesus would be filled, but with what? Grace and paganism? Jewish believers would be filled, but with what? Grace and Judaism? Both were to be filled with God’s fullness, that fullness which had been made accessible to them through the sacrifice of Jesus and freely applied by the Holy Spirit. To sum up the prayer: God grant that you may be strengthened, that you may be possessed, that you may be rooted, that you may vision, that you may know, that you may be filled!

It is to be observed that the order of the Trinity, in the prayer, is reversed. The apostle was logical. God through the Son by the Spirit had reached the Ephesians; the Ephesians by the Spirit through the Son, would reach God the Father.

II. THE DOXOLOGY.

Ch. 3:20, 21. *“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations of the age of the ages. Amen.”*

It is evident that as the apostle presented the believers of Ephesus to God in prayer, that as the Spirit led him from petition to petition in an ascending scale in behalf of them, that he the petitioner was made to realize the answer to the

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prayer, to himself, and when the climax was reached he experienced a fullness of God in his own soul that gave birth to an exclamation of praise toward God, the infinite source of all mercies, past, present, and to "all the generations of the age of the ages" that exhausted his vocabulary. His soul burned with an inexpressible passion to convey to believers that *God is able!* How able is God? The apostle in his prayer had asked for much, as much as language could convey, but God's ability to do reached beyond all that he could ask, and while he could think of much that was beyond his ability to put into words, God's ability to do extended above all that he could think, "visioning absolute infinity of gracious power!" The double abundance, "exceeding abundant" denoted infinite excess of the gracious "operation of the strength of God's might." The standard of God's ability to do was according to the power that was working in them. The power that was working in them was the same power that had raised Jesus from the dead, and had transformed Saul the persecutor into Paul the apostle and had made Ephesian believers "new creatures." Measured by that standard of power, the work which had been done for them and in them, it was able to work on and on until their ultimate sanctification and glorification would be consummated!

All that had been conveyed to believers relative to redemption and the Church had been purposed "before the foundation of the world." Neither men nor angels had had a hand in the plan of eternal salvation; neither men nor angels had contributed a thought to the scheme of redemption. All the glory is ascribed to God. (Ch. 1:4, 5, 9, 11; 2:10; 3:9). "The new creation," the Church, will ascribe glory to its infinite source and Author, through Jesus Christ who made the plan of the infinite Father effective, literally, through all the generations of the age of the ages! Amen, so might it be.

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“In all our Maker’s grand designs,
Omnipotence, with wisdom shines;
His works, through all this wondrous frame,
Declare the glory of his name.”

CHAPTER VII.

THEME: THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH AND THE METHOD AND SOURCE OF ITS GROWTH.

The apostle having disclosed to the Ephesian believers the "eternal purpose" respecting redemption through the blood of Christ and the terms of admission "into the body of Christ," he next took up the subject of "The Unity of the Church (the body of Christ) and the Method and Source of Its Growth."

I. The Ground of the Unity of the Church is Seven-fold.

vv. 4-6. *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye were called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."*

First. "There is one body." v. 4.

Included in the figure of a body are unity, organization, relationship, adaptability, compactness, growth and purpose. The unity of the Church is one of the more important sub-themes of the epistle. Jews and Gentiles were "reconciled to God in one body." A schism in the Church (body) of Christ was unthinkable. So vital was its unity to the whole scheme of redemption and the "eternal purpose" respecting all human kindreds that never for one moment did the apostle, in the presence of Pharisees, Judaizers, or pagan rulers, show a disposition to compromise, but fearlessly proclaimed "the gospel of free grace." He taught, prayed, traveled, plead, wept, suffered and died to establish the "unity of the Church on the terms of the gospel of grace."

The Church is declared to be the body of Christ in Rom.

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12:4, 5; 1st Cor. 12:25-27; Eph. 1:23; Col. 1:24. The preciousness of the body (Church) is set forth in Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25.

Second. "There is one Spirit." v. 4.

Twenty-three titles are ascribed to the Holy Spirit in scripture. The Holy Spirit, in a very real sense, is God in the nature—mode of his existence and proceeding operation. To shut the Spirit out of the heart is to shut God out, and is to deny him the only way he has of abiding in the life. To attribute the power and the work of the Holy Spirit to the devil is to blaspheme against the Spirit, and is to be guilty of the unpardonable sin. (Mat. 12:24-32). John's word of caution must be heeded or dire results will follow. (1st Jn. 4:1-3).

Third. "There is one hope of your calling." v. 4.

Hope here means the sentiment awakened by the calling referred to in v. 1. Believing Jews and Gentiles had been "chosen" (called) to be the spiritual children of God. (1:4, 5). They had been called to be the people of God. (Rom. 9:24, 25). They had been called "unto the kingdom and glory of God." (1st Thess. 2:12). They had been called to "obtain the glory of Jesus Christ." (2nd Thess. 2:14). They had been called "unto eternal glory." (1st Pe. 5:10). The character of their calling is described as "a high calling," a holy calling, "a heavenly calling." (Phil. 3:14; 2nd Tim. 1:9; Heb. 3:1). Jesus' death, resurrection, ascension and advocacy was the source and inspiration of their hope.

Fourth. "There is one Lord." v. 5.

Jesus Christ is beyond comparison. At least 367 titles are assigned to him in the Old and New Testaments. Each title conveys something in addition to that which is conveyed by other titles. In him, indeed, dwelt the fullness of the God-head bodily. In Christ the infinite Father sees the believer

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to be His child and the child sees in Christ his heavenly Father. (Jn. 14:9). The members of Christ's body rest their salvation alone upon Christ and his work. (Acts 4:12; Heb. 5:9; 7:22-28; 9:11-28; Rev. 1:5, 6).

Fifth. "There is one faith." v. 5.

Faith here means the instrument of receiving salvation. (2:8). Faith in Christ secures salvation according to the terms of the gospel. (Jn. 3:15, 16, 36; 5:24; 6:40; 11:25; 12:46; 20:31; Acts 8:37; 10:43; 13:39; 16:31; Rom. 9:33; 10:9; 2nd Tim. 3:15; 1st Jn. 5:1).

Sixth. "There is one baptism." v. 5.

The apostle having just called attention to the instrument of justification which is faith, it would seem logical next to call attention to that which immediately follows justification which is regeneration, the work of the Holy Spirit. In this connection it is fitting that we interpret baptism in the light of 1st Cor. 12:13, 14; "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many." There can be no objection to water baptism, provided it is the external sign of faith.

Seventh. "One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all" v. 6. "There is one God and Father of all," is the climax and contains the fundamental ground of unity. The unity of the Church is in the unity of God. The one God, who as the infinite source of life and all mercies is the Eternal Father; who as the head and savior of the body, is the Lord Jesus Christ, and who in his operation in the consciousness of man is the Holy Spirit.

The apostle led the Ephesian believers step by step (1:10, 23; 2:14-16, 20-22; 3:9, 10, 15) up to a full revelation of the ground of the unity of the church. The seven-fold reason is perfect and admits of no ground for a schism.

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II. The Variety of Gifts in Connection with, and in their Relation to, the Unity of the Church.

Ch. 4:7-10. *"But unto every one of us is given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things)."*

In the mind of the apostle is the figure of a body. This body had been the recipient of a variety of gifts, and one gift was not at variance with another gift, but all gifts had been given with reference to conformity of action. Part is related to part, each to bear its "pack"; (Gal. 6:5), and each to aid the other to bear its "burden" (Gal. 6:2), in reaching a common purpose. This thought is further developed in 1st Cor. 12:5-31.

First. Christ is designated as the giver of the gifts specified in our lesson with the exception of "the gift of grace" mentioned in the seventh verse which is the gift of the Father. The gift of the Father, usually referred to as natural talent, has been given "according to the measure of the gift of Christ," and this gift of the Father determines the position Christ will give the believer in his body. Natural talents are never credited to Christ. It would appear according to the divine plan that natural talents and spiritual gifts fully harmonize.

Christ's gift of himself constitutes the full measure, the perfect standard, as to character and degree, quality and quantity, and all other gifts to the body, whether they are the gifts of the Father or the Spirit, in nature and purpose, will harmonize with the gift of Christ. The work of the hand agrees with the work of the foot, but both are under the mastership of the head.

Second. *The fitness of Jesus Christ to make gifts.*

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1. The fitness of Jesus Christ to make gifts is the fitness of a conqueror. Jesus "led captivity captive." v. 8. The quotation is from the 68th Psalm, a hymn of triumph, on the occasion of placing the ark in Zion, and was accepted by the apostle as Messianic, celebrating the victory of Christ.

Satan, sin and death had conquered humanity. The human race had been led into captivity. Jesus the representative of the new humanity took "captivity" and its agents "captive." Satan, sin and death are held captive under the hand that was nailed to the cross. Jesus triumphed over Satan at every turn. (Mat. 4:3-11). Jesus conquered sin by living a sinless life and by being made a "propitiation for the sins of the whole world." (1st Jn. 2:2). Jesus conquered death by his resurrection and by removing the "sting" and the stinger from death, transforming it into sleep. Well has the poet sang:

"Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep,
From which none ever wakes to weep."

2. The fitness of Jesus Christ to make gifts is further emphasized by the measure of his conquest. v. 9. Ascended implies that he had first descended; descended "into the lower parts of the earth." The apostle is not now describing "a suffering servant," but on the contrary, he is describing a conqueror distributing gifts among his loyal subjects, therefore, his descent into the "lower parts of the earth" could not have meant "the grave as the climax of his humiliation," but that his descent had been into hades, the region of imprisoned spirits. (1st Pe. 3:18-20; 4:5, 6). The conquest of Christ was universal, which, while his universal conquest does not warrant a belief in a *second* chance would seem to warrant a belief in *one chance*.

3. The fitness of Jesus Christ to make gifts is based upon his present exaltation, "above all the heavens." v. 10.

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To contemplate the far reaching victories of Jesus staggers the finite mind. His descent "into the lower parts of the earth," and his ascent above all heavens! Then, the Word in the unknown councils of eternity; then, the Agent of creation and the Angel of the old covenant; then, the Word made flesh, the babe in a manger; then, the Man of the ages, the patient teacher, healer, lover; then, the suffering servant sweating drops of blood; then, prostrate under a cross; then, dying on the cross; then, buried behind a sealed tomb; then, breaking down the gates of death and hell and returning with a tread that shook the earth; then, announcing to redeemed humanity, "All is well, all hail"; then pronouncing the benediction of peace upon his frightened disciples and later commissioned them to tell all the earth the story of gospel redemption; then, ascending above all heavens to sit at the right hand of God in the heavenly places; and, now, having touched in his victorious conquest the extremes of the universe, he has entered upon his function of filling the whole universe with the fullness of the Godhead, and in virtue of that function he distributes gifts to men! (Matt. 28:18).

III. The Gifts of Christ to the Church.

4:11. *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers."*

First. Jesus gave apostles to the Church.

The apostles Jesus gave to the Church were those qualified by God's grace. v. 7. In fact, Jesus gave those chosen by the Father. Jesus did nothing of himself. (Jn. 8:28).

The apostles of the first rank had no successors. (Ac. 5:13). The twelve thrones promised the apostles (Matt. 19:28), did not include additional thrones to accommodate the arrogant, political ambitions of fraudulent successors!

The word apostle also meant one sent by the Lord. In this sense there have been and still are many apostles of Jesus, who are receiving authority and might direct from

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Jesus the head of the body and not through "succession"! All such are gifts of Christ to the Church. (1st Cor. 3:21-23).

Second. Jesus gave prophets to the Church. v. 11.

The prophets of the Old Testament and their writings occupied the place of first importance and their writings dealt largely with events to come, while the New Testament prophets dealt mostly with the present, making known the will of God relative to the age of the Church. God's will concerning humanity during the first century of the gospel of grace will be God's will concerning humanity the last century of the gospel of grace. The original apostles of Jesus having received knowledge of God's will by inspiration and direct revelation for all the generations of the Church, must therefore be included in those who possessed the Spirit of prophecy. In some instances the apostles quoted other writers (2nd Pe. 3:13; Isa. 65:17), and recorded some things that were commonly believed among the saints. The writer of the book of Revelation claims that he was authorized to record the things which he had seen, and the things which were, "and the things which shall be hereafter." (Rev. 1:19). We feel safe in saying, the apostles possessed the Spirit of prophecy, but not all New Testament prophets were apostles. (Acts 11:27, 28; 21:4, 9-11).

Third. Jesus gave evangelists to the church. v. 11.

Evangelists were Spirit-filled men who traveled from place to place proclaiming "the unsearchable riches of Christ." The nature of their office is judged by the work they did, of which Philip, one of the seven, furnishes an example. (Acts 8:5-8, 26-40).

Fourth. Jesus gave pastors and teachers to the church. v. 11.

Pastors, or shepherds, were settled ministers of congregations. They were so named because it was their function to feed, lead and guide the flock over which the Holy Spirit

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had made them overseers. (Ac. 20:28). Teacher being without the article, it is clear that pastor and teacher indicates two functions of the same office. As teachers they communicate divine knowledge. The one function without the other would mean a crippled ministry. (Acts 13:1; 1st Tim. 5:17; 1st Peter 5:2-4).

While these gifts of Christ to the Church, in value, can not be computed, it is to be kept in mind that their functions and relative positions and value, are to be gauged according to the perfect standard, Christ's gift of himself. Believers and officials comparing themselves among themselves, and measuring themselves by themselves are not wise. (2 Cor. 10:12).

IV. The immediate and ultimate purpose for which Christ has given ministers to the Church.

Chp. 4:12-16. *"For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto edifying of itself in love."*

1. *"For the perfecting of the saints."* v. 12.

The perfecting of the saints occupies the emphatic position, and is the final, ultimate, purpose for which Christ has given servants to the Church. The saints, believers, had obtained redemption and forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ; they had been regenerated and baptized

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by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, and now through ministering and building they were to reach a state of perfection. They had become positional saints, enjoyed positional sanctification, the moment they believed, but they were to move on into experimental sanctification and by continued ministry and edifying reach ultimate perfection.

2. *"Unto the work of ministering."* v. 12.

Ministering was the immediate purpose for which Christ had given servants to the Church. The overseers of the Church are not lords, but servants. Christ, the head, was the supreme servant. (Matt. 20:28). Ministering had a two-fold application. Believers were to be ministered unto and believers were to minister. The Christian graces can not be attained and perfected in idleness. Being fed alone would not enable them to reach perfection; they must be fed and they must feed. Ministering is to the end of:

3. *"The building up of the body of Christ."* v. 12.

The nature of the work of building is two-fold: (1) Increasing the number of believers, which is the definite work of evangelists. (2) Building the whole by causing or promoting the growth of each member. The growth of each member is the result of proper placing of parts, and proper feeding. This is the work of pastors and teachers. (Acts 20:32).

To sum up this part of the lesson: Christ gave apostles, prophets, pastors and teachers to the Church for the immediate purpose of ministering to the end of building and building to the ultimate end of attaining perfection.

4. If the Church is to reach the ultimate objective it will be necessary for the members, individually, and collectively, to attain to "the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

The thirteenth verse describes in full the ultimate purpose for which Jesus gave the ministry to the Church, and

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this verse defines perfection as used in the twelfth verse.

The first attainment of the perfect body is "unity of faith and unity of knowledge," faith in the Son of God based upon knowledge of the Son of God. While faith here is the instrument of receiving it is understood that it receives the Son of God according to knowledge, and that knowledge of the Son of God must agree with and include the "eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ Jesus in the councils of the ages," and that knowledge must agree with and include a correct understanding of the redemptive work of Christ, his present advocacy and the assurance of his second coming. (Ac. 1:11). This unity of faith and knowledge is to be attained by the member and by the body.

"Unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" conveys the two-fold thought: (1) A proper fitness, a stage of development, capacity to receive and retain the fullness of Christ. (2) The designated number to complete the body. Both would be necessary to attain "unto the stature of the fullness of Christ." Through the centuries of the Christian Church Jesus has been gathering unto himself members for his body and shall continue the work of building until the body is complete.

The one condition on which members are received into the body of Christ is through faith in him. It is to be noted that there is an innumerable company of subjects of the kingdom of God, who have not been incorporated into Christ's body through faith in him. Such as many Old Testament worshippers, infants, irresponsible human beings, and according to the apostle Peter there are those of every nation who feareth God, and worketh righteousness, "who are accepted with him." (Acts 10:34, 35). These it would seem are included under the covenant of grace outside the body. It is submitted, that the choice of God foreordaining the designated number of souls to complete the body of Christ, a body that is now forming, and a body that is

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fulfilling and will fulfill in the ages to come a specific purpose has nothing to do with the eternal destiny of some other people!

It must further be considered that a large number of believers in Jesus have not attained to that degree of perfection in "faith and knowledge of the Son of God" that would qualify them to be incorporated into a perfect body. Are all such, or any such, lost? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts 16:31). The jailer believed and was saved. Had he died the next day he would have been saved, but would he have been qualified to be merged into a perfect body? "Who-soever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10:13). "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. 10:9). Is there not a clear distinction based upon a difference, in scripture, between being saved and being a member of Christ's body?

Note.—There is a difference between the gospel of the Kingdom Jesus preached and the gospel of grace the apostles preached after the descent of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said little children are subjects of the kingdom; he did not say they were members of his body. The apostles under grace said nothing about it; there was nothing for them to say. The kingdom of God includes more than the Church. There is more of the kingdom of God in India than there is of the Church, and there may be more Church in North America than there is of the kingdom of God. When Jesus comes to establish the Kingdom of heaven on earth, his body, the Church *will be with him*.

A certain number of souls were designated in the choice of God to make up the body of Christ. Not one more; not one less. It may be claimed, also, that not only was the number pre-determined, but the persons themselves were

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chosen, and those "whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Rom. 8:29, 30). The foregoing describes the members of the body of Christ. But the foregoing, it would seem, does not include all provided for in John Three-Sixteen; all the apostle Peter had in mind when he was lead of the Spirit to write, that it is not the will of God that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2nd Pe. 3:9). It is contended that the line is drawn, to which we must agree, but where does the line fall? Between any human being and hope in Christ of eternal salvation? The reply of inspiration is "that God is not willing that any should perish!" The line falls between subjects of the Kingdom and members of the body of Christ. The apostle Paul could not understand why he who had persecuted the Church of Christ should be incorporated into that body and through the grace of God called to be its chief exponent! Members of the body of Jesus shall *reign with him*, (2 Tim. 2:12), whilst subjects of the kingdom shall be *reigned over*. Going back to Ch. 1:10, the unifying of all things in heaven in Christ includes the union of the members of the body of Jesus and the subjects of the kingdom. "And there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. 11:15).

Note B.—It is contended by some that the gifts of Christ to the Church which are to continue "till" are only the pastors and teachers, but there is no ground in the text for such contention. The apostolic period ended with the death of the twelve, but in the sense that persons are divinely commissioned to preach the word in season and out of season,

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and to engage in other Christian work continues, and shall continue "till" the body is perfect. In the mean time, the ministry of the twelve apostles continues. Their teachings constitute the truth of the gospel message throughout the age of the Church. The Spirit of the New Testament prophets abides in the body of Jesus and functions "as the Spirit wills." The Spirit's zeal of biblical evangelism burns in the hearts of those "called." The ministry of shepherds and teachers continues and shall continue "till" the perfected body is summoned to meet the Lord in the air. (1 Thess. 4:15-17).

V. Christ gave the ministry to the Church to protect it from crafty enemies. v. 14.

The enemies, in our lesson, to be protected from were false teachers and their doctrines. The false teachers are represented (1) as lying in wait to deceive. They deliberately planned to deceive by teaching error. These teachers were organized, had their system of instruction and were apparently logical. The apostle describes their teachings as (2) "wind of doctrine," puff of air. The teachings of religious cults and quacks had no foundation in the truth, and like the wind were forever changing, now this way, now that way. Further, the apostle describes these advocates of error as using (3) crafty methods. "Cunning craftiness" refers to the craft gamblers used, and the "sleight of men" refers to "dice players," who by the trick of loading the dice caused the number to turn up that suited their purpose. The teaching of such teachers were especially dangerous to babes in Christ, the unindoctrinated; dangerous, for the reason that their teachings appeared to be the same or nearly the same as the teachings of Christ; apparently harmless, they furthered the system of error. (Acts 20:29, 30).

By what means would the ministers of Christ protect the Church from these crafty teachers?

First. By "speaking the truth in love." v. 15.

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Truth was the matter to be spoken and "in love" the manner. Believers were to be fed on the truth of the gospel of grace, and that truth was to be conveyed, taught, in the spirit of love. Gospel truth spoken in love would have a two-fold effect: (1) It would establish the believer in the truth and warmth of the gospel thereby protecting him from false teachings, (2) causing him to "grow" up into Christ in all things."

Second. The growth of the Church is into Christ who is its source. v. 15. Jesus Christ is the *source* of the growth of the Church by reason of his position; he is the head of the Church. The Church receives life from its head. Life means (1) existence. The Church owes its existence to Christ. (Matt. 16:18). Life means (2) knowledge. To know God and Jesus Christ is eternal life. (Jn. 17:3). Life means (3) possession. "He that hath the Son hath life." (1st Jn. 5:12). Christ himself is the believer's life. (Col. 3:4).

Third. Jesus Christ is the *sphere* of the church's growth; "Grow up into him in all things." v. 15. Jesus the *sphere* of the growth of the Church is both internal and external. Internal, following the believer's Spirit-birth there is growth into (1) the meaning of the teachings of Christ. (Jn. 8:31, 32; 13:7). The members of his body grow into the (2) likeness and image of Christ. (Rom. 8:9; 1st Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:10; 2nd Pe. 1:4). External: the sphere of the activities of the Church is marked out, characterized by the work of Christ. (Jn. 14:12).

Fourth. The method of the growth of the Church is by the whole body making increase of the body. v. 16. The body as a whole contributes to the whole. This body is a living organism, having life in itself, life that comes from its head, and it makes increase by each and every member growing and by each and every member contributing to the growth of each and every member of the body. The growth

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of the body is (2) symmetrical by reason of its members being joined (jointed) together and compacted. The adaptation of part to part produces compactness, and the life current flowing through the joined members reaches every part of the body, producing growth. The life of the body is internal, but the development of the body is external and is promoted through outward instrumentalities, the gifts of Christ to the Church, the ministry. The measure of life given to each member is (3) "according as each part works in its own proper measure." All members have not the same office; all members do not need the same measure of life, but all members need life. And whilst that life comes from Christ, the head, it reaches the members of the body through other members of the same body.

Eadie says, "No member or ordinance is superfluous. The widow's mite was commended by him who sat over against the treasury. Solomon built a temple. Joseph provided a tomb. Mary the mother gave birth to the child. Lydia entertained apostles, and Phoebe carried an epistle to the Romans. While Joshua fought, Moses prayed. The snuffers and trays were as necessary as the magnificent lamp-stand."

The apostle Paul directed the attention of the Corinthians to the fact that "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And that there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And that there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." (1st Cor. 12:4-7).

Fifth. The body of Jesus "edifies itself in love." v. 16.

The Church of Christ, the offspring of infinite love, can only be built up in love. Other bodies may grow up in pride, in material splendor, in ambition, in human power, in selfishness, in injustice, in intellectual brilliancy and even in hate, but the Church of Jesus can only be edified in the warmth and inspiration of holy love.

CHAPTER VIII.

THEME: THE WORTHY AND THE UNWORTHY WALK.

The apostle has come to the more practical part of his epistle. The Ephesians are entreated to walk in a way befitting those who had accepted the call to membership in the body of Christ, having special regard for the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Chp. 4:1-3, 17-19. *"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace . . . This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."*

THE WORTHY AND THE UNWORTHY WALK CONTRASTED.

I. *The walk that is worthy.* v. 1.

Walk here means the outer life consisting of words, attitudes and acts, as an expression of the inner life of thoughts, intents, motives and faith. Purity of heart must express itself in acts of virtue; love in the heart must express itself in deeds of kindness. "I . . . the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you" was an impressive appeal. The Gentiles would remember that he was a prisoner in their behalf. He entreats them as a lover to "walk worthy of their vocation."

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First. The walk that was worthy took thought of position. v. 1.

Judged by that which follows (vv. 4-6) the apostle had in mind the Church, the body of Christ. The Ephesian believers had been called to membership in that body which had been made possible through the sacrifice of Christ and made effective by the Holy Spirit. The position to which they had been "chosen in Christ" was an exalted one and was permanent (vocation), now, they are entreated to magnify their position. This they would do by having a profound sense of appreciation. Especially would the Gentiles who had been called out of pagan darkness, misery and degradation to occupy a place of brightness, joy and uprightness in the body of Christ have a keen sense of the power and kindness of free grace.

Second. The walk that was worthy took thought of the responsibility of membership in that body in relation to the unity of the whole. This responsibility would be met by each Ephesian believer "making haste to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." v. 3.

"The unity of the Spirit" is that unity of which the Holy Spirit is the author. There being but one Spirit, there is in fact, unity in the "inner life" of believers; but the flesh warreth against the Spirit (Rom. 8:5-13), and it is through the physical members of the body the inner life of the Spirit is to manifest itself (Rom. 6:13), therefore, the physical members must be made subject to the law of grace. (Rom. 8:13; 1 Cor. 9:27). The manifestation of the unity of the Spirit is destroyed by careless speaking, or thoughtless conduct, or by manifesting a censorious or a sectarian or contentious spirit which give out the impression that there are distinctions among the followers of Jesus based upon essential differences; thus doing violence to the cause of truth.

Further, the unity of the Spirit is to be kept in the bond of peace. There might be an outward show of oneness that

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would lack reality. Lit, "In the bond which is peace." Christ himself is our peace (2:14), and he by the sacrifice of himself made Jews and Gentiles one in fact, thus making peace. (2:15). The one mind, the one accord, were fundamentally essential in the upper room. (Acts 2:1). The Ephesians were not required to "unite the Spirit," for there is but one Spirit, and they were entreated in Christ their peace-bond to allow the Spirit to manifest himself outwardly to be what he is—*one Spirit*.

Third. The walk that was worthy manifested the faith in the heart through passive graces; humility, meekness, long-suffering and loving forbearance. These graces belong to the same frame of mind, members of the same family of Christian graces and they are always together. Humility comes first and is in point of order the older member of the family, and where this grace leads the others, her sister graces, follow. Humility is the result of a clear understanding of the truth. What explanation could the Ephesian believers give for their position in the body of Christ? By whom had they been called? By whom had they been redeemed? By whom had they been quickened from death in trespasses and sins and raised up and made to sit in the heavenly places? By whom had they been baptized into the body of Christ? All had been done for them. Why? Had their wealth, or honor, or personal choice, or merit of any kind influenced God in his choice! A clear understanding of the truth under the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit would give a keen sense of absolute dependence upon God, humbleness of mind. Meekness is the logical expression of the lowly mind manward. Humility toward God shows itself in meekness toward man. Meekness is a peace-loving and peace-seeking, spirit that seeks for the word which will turn away wrath. It is opposed to a boisterous, self-assertive attitude, and a rude striving with others. The believer may be tempted to become bigoted by reason of success, or he

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may be severely tried by oppositions and defeats; it matters not what the nature of the test is, by remaining humble before God, he is able to suffer long the provocation, if such it be, continuing in patience to endure in love. In the New Testament long-suffering is sometimes rendered patience, and signifies persistent endurance, in action or suffering. In action, Phil. 3:14; in suffering, James 5:7, 8.

Forbearance means "to bear up under." A long protracted restraint of the soul would severely test it. The temptation to save itself by lying down under the fire of the enemy would come with the fierceness of the tempest, but humbleness before God grants no yielding. Forbearance implies also a quiet, dignified attitude under trial.

These graces are to be manifested "in love." Other motives might incline him to restrain himself, such as ambition, or selfish policy, or awaiting a better opportunity to get even, but "in love" bars out all other considerations. And while manner is implied, the source of the strength required is the central thought. How can the soul endure? The answer is, "in love." "Love suffereth long, is not easily provoked, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." (1 Cor. 13:4, 5, 7).

Such was the picture of a worthy walk presented by the apostle to the believers of Ephesus. The picture was an attractive one; full of beauty, majesty and glory. Surely, there was awakened in the souls of believers aspirations that reached Christ-ward.

II. The walk that was unworthy. v. 17-19.

The apostle having digressed returns to the thought presented in vv. 1-3, and by contrasting a worthy walk with an unworthy one reveals the exaltation of the former and the degradation of the latter. It is to be observed that the apostle claims the same inspiration writing on practical matters ("in the Lord, v. 17), as on doctrinal points. Of what value is doctrine if suitable fruit is not produced? Jesus

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said a tree is known by its fruit. (Matt. 7:20), A community of believers should not think of themselves as a collection of shade trees, but as a fruitful orchard. The exhortation to believers is against walking "as other Gentiles walk." How were the "other Gentiles" walking?

First. They were walking in the vanity of their mind. v. 17.

Mind here means the moral judgment as that judgment is related to action. It is closely associated with opinion. (1 Cor. 1:10). The character of one's opinion is determined by the character of his moral judgment; the value of his opinion is not measured so much by his intelligence and information as it is by his moral character.

"Vanity" here and in Rom. 8:20; 2 Peter 2:18, refers to a perishable and dying condition, separate from God. The Jews called idols "vain things" (Rom. 1:21). "Vain" in James 2:20 means empty. If "vanity of mind" is understood to mean mere aimlessness it was unworthy because it was aimless, and if the aim was bad it was to be shunned because it was bad. "Vanity of mind" was the result of:

Second. Being darkened in their understanding. v. 18.

"Understanding" means the moral understanding. In Luke 1:51 the same Greek word is translated "imagination." The Gentiles being ignorant of God and the way of salvation were blind to all that was most vital. At best the natural man can not understand spiritual teachings. (1 Cor. 2:14). The natural understanding is not adapted to the things of the Spirit, and is, therefore, disqualified in nature. But the case of the Gentiles had been made still worse, their understanding made more obscure by sin. Their "moral understanding being darkened" it was natural for their "moral judgment" to sanction "walking in vanity."

Third. The foregoing was the result of "being alienated from the life of God." v. 18. The life of God is the life that God gives in Christ. It can not be justly said

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that the Gentiles were responsible for rejecting the life that is offered through the sacrifice of Christ, for they were ignorant of the offer of life through grace, but they were not ignorant of the offer of life through nature. The life that God gives through grace is *offered*; this life is received through faith according to knowledge; but the life God gives in Christ, *referred* to in our lesson, had been given to the Gentiles, had been and is given to all mankind without faith. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John 1:4, 9), The apostle Paul's argument to show that Gentiles were without excuse on the ground that "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made," has foundation in fact only in the light of the universal inner Light, or as he himself says, "the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." (Rom. 1:20; 2:15). The apostle Peter was much surprised to have revealed to him the fact that God is no respecter of persons; that in every nation those who lived according to the inner Light, God's gift to them in Christ, and wrought righteousness, are accepted with God. (Acts 10:34, 35). Known to God, are the multitudes, who belong to this class. But the Gentiles described in our lesson were not of this class, but were of those who did "not like to retain God in their knowledge, and God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." (Rom. 1:28). When God, according to his own law of justice and mercy, was forced "*to give them over* to a reprobate mind," they "*being past feeling*," without respect for God or man, felt free "*to give themselves over*" greedily to unspeakable lewdness as a business. v. 19. The "White slave trade" comes under this head.

We are not at liberty to say that the inner Light in the

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persons described by the apostle was extinguished, but it is evident that there was no ray of light shed forth. v. 18.

The walks contrasted by the apostle presents two pictures so at variance with each other that it would hardly be possible for sincere souls to become confused. The one is a picture of man with God, and the other is a picture of man without God. If all men were equally enlightened all that would be necessary to start mankind on the highway of life would be to submit the pictures with the simple statement, "take your choice." Ephesian believers were exhorted to pursue the walk that was worthy and shun the walk that was unworthy.

III. The apostle presents a close social view of that which is worthy in the life of the believer and that which is unworthy.

Chp. 4:20-32. *"But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; And be ye kind one to an-*

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other, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

First. The believers of Ephesus had learned Christ. v. 20.

Christ here is his own message. Teachings that were imparted to the believers followed their first lesson, and their first lesson was Christ himself. Christ in all his beauty, purity and love; Christ as a sacrificial offering for their sin; Christ in his magnetic redemptive conquest for them; Christ in his warming, renewing, resurrection power. The Ephesian believers had had a personal introduction, in experience, to Christ; they had heard *him* and had heard the truth about him while in vital fellowship with him. v. 21. Others may have heard the messenger only, but the believers addressed, had heard Christ," ye have heard him. "*Him*" is emphatic.

Second. They had heard the truth as it is in Jesus. v. 21.

The writer heard a very enthusiastic professor of Christianity say, "I did not need to come to Church this morning. It would not have hurt me to have spent this Lord's day fishing in Lake Michigan. I am saved by Jesus!" It is evident that he had been taught or had taught himself, but he had not learned the truth as it is in Jesus.

There were, doubtless, self-appointed teachers in Ephesus who would say, "you need not be careful about your living; just believe." To head off teachings of this kind, the apostle reminded believers of the two-fold lesson imparted to them through their vital union with Christ: first, they had been taught the truth about Jesus, and second, they had been taught the truth about themselves.

Third. They had been taught to "put off the old man." v. 22.

The phrase, "the old man" is used three times by Paul and by him only. In Romans 6:6 "our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin:" in Col. 3:9, the "old man" and his deeds had been put off, and in our lesson the

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believers are exhorted to "put off the old man." It was by faith in Jesus Christ that they had become "new creatures," positional saints, and now it was not required of them that they carry a corpse, the body of the "old man" of sin which had been crucified with Christ. Their chance of overcoming the temptations of life was equal to that of Adam before his transgression. (Rom. 5:20). Had not the "old man" been crucified with Christ there would have been no one *in* them to put him "off." Further, had not the "old man" been crucified believers of Ephesus aided by the apostle and assisted by the angels of heaven would not have been able to "put off the old man." The traits, garments, rags of the "old man" come later; now, the apostle is dealing or imparting the truth as it is in Jesus about the "old man" himself. The man is to be put off; the root of evil, the seat of sin.

Fourth. The spirit of the believer's mind was to be renewed. v. 23.

The renewing of the spirit of the believer's mind was and is the work of the Holy Spirit, and comes between, in point of order, the "putting off of the old man" and the "putting on of the new man." The death of Jesus on the cross had struck the death blow to "the body of sin," and had opened the way for the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, and now it is the "new creature" who is entreated to put away, lay off, that which had been crucified with Christ, the old man with his deeds which would open the way for the Holy Spirit to give to the mind a clearer understanding of what "is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:2). In short, believers were exhorted "to go all the way," move on from positional sainthood, sanctification, to experimental sanctification, and this work the Holy Spirit would do when "they reckoned themselves dead to sin," (Rom. 6:11-14) "put off the old man."

Fifth. Believers were instructed to "put on the new man" v. 24.

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It is the "new man" himself who is to be "put on," his garments, robes, traits come later. It would be necessary for believers to recognize the reality of the "new man"; that there was a real some one who had come into being through the exercise of faith in him who had died on the cross. (2:15, 16). Ephesian believers would readily recognize the reality of the "new man" inasmuch as believing Jews were reconciled to believing Gentiles. The "old man" Jew could never have been reconciled to the "old man" Gentile, and vice versa, but both were reconciled to God (and to each other) in "one body" by the cross." (2:16; Gal. 3:28).

Sixth. The basic difference between the "old man" and the "new man."

1. "The old man is corrupting himself according to the deceitful lusts." v. 22.

Deceit is personified, and is an agent of evil. Deceit promises liberty but brings bondage; Deceit through lust, an inordinate desire, promises pleasure but gives pain; promises peace but gives trouble; promises light but gives darkness. Its chief goals that it holds before the eye are power, wealth and pleasure. The subjects of deceit are blinded, deceived, under the impression that to gratify an inordinate desire is the way of happiness. There is no narrow gate in the program of Deceit. Its way is the way of least resistance. It never grows better but worse, the work of corruption is in progress.

2. By way of contrast the "new man" is progressing in righteousness and holiness. v. 24.

"After God" is equivalent to "after the image of him" who had created man. (Col. 3:10). The chief qualities of the "new man" mentioned in the lesson are righteousness, uprightness and fidelity to social obligations, and holiness, the state of the spirit toward God. Holiness is the "inner man" of the Christian toward God; righteousness is the Christian man toward man. These are "of truth," as op-

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posed to "deceit." Righteousness and holiness bred of the truth as it is in Jesus never deceives or disappoints. *Truth promises a crown by the way of the cross!*

Seventh. The traits of the "old man" are contrasted with the traits of the "new man."

1. The "old man who is under the control of deceit" is a liar. v. 25.

Lying is a common vice among pagan nations. However, it is not confined to pagans; it is all too common among civilized people. Lying is a trait of fallen humanity: "They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies," Ps. 58:3. Lying is the result of the mind being out of correspondence with the center and source of truth; of being under the control of "deceit." The devil who abides in error is the father of lies. (John 8:44). He lied to our first parents. They, by their alibis, gave evidence of being apt learners. Lying deceives, injures the liar and is a grievous social evil. As a garment, it fit the "old man", but the "old man" has been put off, therefore, believers were exhorted to lay aside his "rags."

2. "Speak every man truth with his neighbor." v. 25.

This the member of the body of Christ can do for the reason that he is vitally connected with Christ, the truth. Being rightly related to Christ he is also rightly related to his neighbor, he is able to see things in their true light and relations, and being possessed by the spirit of truth he expresses it in love. Inasmuch as believers were members of the body of Christ and members one of another they are entreated to impart truth one to another even as the truth had been conveyed to them in Christ. Words, actions, attitudes and expressions were to wear a truthful aspect thereby strengthening the social order. As a garment, speaking the truth in love is a robe of righteousness, and becomes the "new man."

3. "Let him that stole steal no more." v. 28.

Theft among pagans is considered of small moment. An

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inordinate desire for possession, lust bred of Deceit, in one form or another, is one of the outstanding vices of humanity. Dishonesty in trade, deceit in business, belong to this family. As a garment, stealing, and getting by deceitful methods, are "rags" of the "old man."

4. By way of contrast, "Let him labor with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." v. 28.

Work throughout the scripture is enjoined. (Gen. 2:15; 3:19; Lev. 23:3; Prov. 13:11; 14:23; 1 Thess. 4:11; 11 Thes. 3:12). A safe prayer for believers is recorded in Prov. 30:9. A just standard for eating is recorded in 11 Thes. 3:12. Christianity furnishes believers with at least three legitimate reasons for work. The first is that there might be no excuse for stealing; second, that they may properly provide for those dependent upon them (1 Tim. 5:8), and third, that they may have to give to the needy. Self-support and philanthropy, as a garment, a robe, harmonizes with the character of the "new man."

5. The "old man" indulges in corrupt communications. v. 29.

The speech of the "old man" partakes of the nature of the old man, and is, therefore corrupt. v. 22. The atmosphere of the old man is extremely foul, and his songs, jests and allusions agree with his nature. As a garment, they constitute the "rags" of his covering. Such "rags" ill become the "new man."

6. By way of contrast the "new man" is instructed to speak "that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearer." v. 29.

The themes that are placed before the believer for consideration and conversation are innumerable. No subject is excluded if viewed from the proper point of view, and properly presented. Jesus and the apostles touched the root of subjects embracing God, angels, humanity, heaven, earth,

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government, society, home, Church, redemption, all virtues, all vices, responsibilities, opportunities, wars, peace education and salvation and many others. The spirit of their conversation is not the spirit of "Hark from the tomb a doleful sound" but the Holy Spirit, bright, joyous, animating and inspiring.

An aged minister of the gospel related in my presence that fifty years before he had yielded himself to God. Before his surrender he had learned a number of "suggestive" songs and foul stories. The day after his surrender to Christ he was sorely grieved by reason of the fact that those songs and stories persisted in filling his mind. Deeply distressed he sought a place of seclusion and called the roll, one by one and by name, all songs and stories that belonged to the "old man." "I sought," said he, "divine aid to disassociate them from my memory forever. Fifty years have passed since that day, and while the day and the experience have lived with me, and I remember them now, the songs and the stories have never for one moment returned to me!"

7. The "old man" gives way to unrestrained, malicious tempers. v. 31. The following are traits of the "old man": "Bitterness," bitter frame of mind; "wrath," mere human passion: "Anger," violent outbreak; "clamour," anger manifesting itself in brawling; "evil speaking," result of bitter frame of mind. "Malice," the root of all the rest. These "rags of the old man" to the certain knowledge of the writer have caused more trouble among the members of the body of Christ than the violation of the 18th Amendment! These "rags" did not become believers; they were to be put off.

8. By way of contrast believers are commanded to be "angry, and sin not." v. 26.

This is supposed to be cited from Ps. 4:4, after the Septuagint. Righteous anger is not a vice, but a virtue and is commanded. The perplexing question is, What is righteous anger? Righteous anger has a cause and not an excuse.

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(Matt. 5:22; John 2:15). Error presented under the cloak of Christ; promises bred of Deceit offered to the uninstructed; injury done to a fellow member of the body of Christ and neglected and misguided "little ones" are some reasons for righteous anger.

The warning "and sin not" is given because it is needed. The temptation to allow righteous anger to burn in the heart until it embitters the disposition is strong, hence "let not the sun go down on your wrath." The embittered heart, however righteous the cause, announces that there is room in the heart for the devil. (v. 27). For the believer to wear any of the "rags" of the "old man" tempts the devil and grieves the Holy Spirit. v. 30. The nature of the vices of the "old man" are directly opposed to the nature of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. There can be no fellowship between the Holy Spirit and error in any form. Further, the Holy Spirit urges consecration, separation from the world, and active Christian service. For one to obstruct the work of the Holy Spirit by playing with "the deeds of the old man," or quench the Spirit by refusing to allow him to express himself in praise, prayer or service, or to cherish the spirit of the lust of the world, is to grieve the Spirit. The viciousness of grieving the Spirit appears when it is remembered that it is "in the Spirit believers are sealed unto the day of redemption." "The day of redemption" is when Christ shall come and claim his own. If Jesus when he comes to claim his own had no other way of recognizing his own the Holy Spirit-Seal would be enough to identify them. The Holy Spirit is the Seal of ownership.

Malice, with her various colored "rags," is not to be worn by the believer, no, not for a moment; what then, shall be worn? "Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ has forgiven you." v. 32. "Become kind"; brotherly kindness is to take the place of "anger." The believer is a member of a body;

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as such, as he treats others he treats himself. In Christ, the believer is part of another and the other is a part of the believer, and for him to withhold forgiveness from another is to withhold it from himself. "Forgiving one another, even as God in Christ has forgiven you" is the strongest appeal for the exercise of human forgiveness on record. The believer having in his heart the Spirit's testimony of Divine forgiveness, has in his heart the Spirit that will enable him to forgive his brother. The appeal is to a profound sense of appreciation, one of the noblest sentiments of the redeemed human heart. The appeal of the law is "Forgive that you may be forgiven"; this appeal is to fear: but forgive *because* you have been forgiven is the appeal of the gospel of grace.

The contrast between the "old man" and the "new man" is clearly stated by the apostle. "The wayfaring man, though he be uninstructed, need not err therein."

The "old man" is still corrupting himself through the lusts of deceit.

The "new man" is making progress in righteousness and holiness.

The "old man" is dressed in the "rags" that become his nature.

The "new man" is clothed in the robes that bespeak his character.

CHAPTER IX.

THEME: FOLLOWERS OF GOD AS DEAR CHILDREN.

The apostle in our present study has dropped the figure of a body and taken up that of a family. The believer in this chapter is a beloved child. The relation of a child to other members of the family is no more vital than the relation of a member to the body of Christ, but the child-relation presents a phase of association that because of its intimacy is morally dangerous. The vices mentioned in this lesson belong to that class of evils which would mostly spring from close association, especially while under the stimulating warmth of love. Hence the need of an example, a pattern. Whom shall the children of God follow, imitate?

Chp. 5:1-7. *"Be ye therefore followers (imitators) of God, as dear children: And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints: Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolator, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them."*

1. Children are exhorted to imitate God, their Father. v. 1.

"Be ye," become thinkers, doers with God. "Therefore" refers back to the 31st verse of the 4th chapter. Malice,

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her brood of tempers, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour and evil speaking, the rags of the old man were to be put off, and as the children of God they are exhorted to follow the example of their Father who in Christ had forgiven them.

An imitator is one who does what he sees another do, or hears another has done. There is a sense in which such a life would be mechanical, apish, but for a child to follow the example of its father is more than a mere imitation, in fact, in part, it is the nature of the father expressing itself through the child, inasmuch as the child partakes of the nature of its father. (II Pe. 1:4).

2. Imitators of God, walk as Christ walked. v. 2.

The example of God, the Invisible One, is made manifest through Christ the visible. Christ is the express image of God. (11 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3). Christ declared God. (John 1:18). Christ revealed God, the Father. (John 14:9). Believers imitate God by following the example of Christ.

First. Christ walked in sacrificial love. v. 2.

God is love; his acts are acts of love, and his gifts are expressions of love. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son." (John 3:16). "As Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." v. 2. (Rom. 5:6-8; Gal. 1:4; 2:20; 3:13). The spirit of loving self-sacrifice which characterized Christ is to be exhibited by the children of God, v. 2. (John 13:34, 35; 15:9, 10, 17; 1 John 3:16, 17).

"Offering and sacrifice" are nearly synonymous. Offering is the more general term and includes Christ's life, example, teachings, works and death. Sacrifice is special and means a "slain offering" in behalf of another. The offering and sacrifice of Christ were to satisfy justice, to meet the demands of the law, to emphasize and glorify the righteousness of God's moral government, and gave to mankind the

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proof of God's love for a lost world. (Rom. 5:6-8; 1 John 4:9, 10).

The offering and sacrifice of Jesus were not made grudgingly or reluctantly, but in love. The person sacrificed and the spirit of that sacrifice pleased the Father. To him it was an "odor of sweet smell." v. 2; (Gen. 8:21; 11 Cor. 2:14-16).

The apostle, in his method of teaching, followed the example of Jesus, in that he presented to his readers first the ideal and then proceeded to point out the vices to be shunned and the virtues to be practiced in order to reach the ideal. (Matt. 5:3-14).

No higher standard of moral and spiritual excellency was ever placed before any people by any writer or teacher than that which was set before the Ephesians in the second verse of this chapter. They were exhorted to practice a loving sacrifice as the children of God that would be pleasing to God. In that high altitude of spiritual fervor, there was danger of being pierced by the devil's arrows, arrows of the fleshly kind. Therefore, the warning that follows.

Second. The walk of Christ prohibited the lusts of the flesh. vv. 3-5.

The warning against fleshly lusts in connection with that which has gone before is given because it is needed in *this* connection. While the contrast between spiritual love and physical passion is very great there are times when to the uninformed the contrast is lost sight of and the fatal step is taken. The Spirit that discerns is not equally clear and strong in all persons. The tragical part of it is that many step from the spiritual into the physical ignorantly. A frame of mind of great warmth, a social fellowship that recognizes for the time no restraint, a freedom of spirit that sees no barrier, a physical mingling and near association of the sexes in child-like innocence, a magnetism born of excited minds

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and inflamed hearts that attracts and draws kindred minds constitutes most critical moments in the life of the believer. Informed and sincere, evangelists guard against the approach of this false, foul spirit, a fervor begotten of physical magnetism.

The severest criticism against popular religious revivals that has come to my notice is that successful leaders in religious revivals are men and women of great physical magnetism, and that the younger they are the more successful they are as drawing cards. The contention was that the Holy Spirit fell on the people, in the home of Cornelius, who heard the "word," and not when they saw the speaker and felt the physical magnetism of his presence. The after effect of religious intoxication was likened to the after effect of the dance hall association.

In the larger cities of our country there are nests of "free-lovers" and other named religious cults who claim to have reached the unscriptural state of "sinless perfection," and their practices are most depraved. Their claim is that their profanities are not profane, their self-indulgencies and immoral practices are not immoral, that their abominations are "sanctified to their use," that they can do no wrong. History furnishes no darker pages than those that tell of blighted souls and ruined bodies, broken hearts and homes and voluptuous practices, under the garb of religion. It is clear that the devil is in the religious revival (not Christian) business, and his most successful instrument in securing followers is physical magnetism, a spirit begotten of physical blood, zeal, manner and voice, a spirit fundamentally and eternally opposed to the character and work of the Holy Spirit. Recently, in a gathering of ministers of the gospel a paper was read by one of the number who placed strong emphasis upon what he claimed to be the essential point in preaching. "After all," said he, "the big thing in preaching is to put *ourselves* across." (Read 11 Tim. 4:2-4).

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The exhortation, "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience," refers to pagan and some "easy minded nominal Christian "teachers of Ephesus, the pagans defending a life of depraved pleasures and the nominal Christians advocating the necessity of the young and the older people expressing their overflow of spirit in self-indulgences. On the contrary, they were exhorted to give vent to their lively feelings in "giving of thanks." The course of life is largely determined by the manner of expressing super-abundance of the emotions. If the emotions are allowed to express themselves in foul jestings, in words, songs, and conduct contrary to the love and Spirit of Jesus the door is open to the grip of temptations that lead to the deeper depths of infamy, the more flagrant, revolting, fleshly indulgences. Because of "these fleshly indulgences" "cometh the wrath of God." The wrath of God is displayed here and now by loss of spiritual appetite, vision and aspiration.

"Why," cried the libertine, "I have seen so much, heard so much, thought so much and lived so much that I find I have no morals!" What a hell! Such have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. v. 5.

The strength of Christianity is pitted against self-indulgences of every kind. There is an imperative demand for Christian education, Biblical catechetical instruction in the homes of all believers, that children and parents might be able to distinguish between truth and error, spiritual love and physical passion, the upward fight and the downward glide. The Greek was taught to "know himself," the Roman to "control himself" and the Christian to "deny himself." (Matt. 5:28-30).

The apostle closes this part of the lesson with the exhortation, "Be not ye partakers with them." For the believer to partake of the indulgences of the flesh and of the world mean that he must suffer the punishment that comes upon

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"the children of disobedience." Free grace does not save believers in their sins, but from their sins.

Third. To follow Jesus is to walk in the light. v. 8.

Ch. 5:8-14. "*For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by light: for whatsoever is made manifest is light. Wherefore, he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*"

The apostle contrasts the believers present state with their past.

I. In the past "*they had been darkness.*" v. 8.

Surely, they had walked in darkness, gave outward evidence by words and acts of being in moral and spiritual darkness, which, however, was the result of being darkness itself. "If therefore," said Jesus, "the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness," (Matt. 5:23). The moral judgment of the Ephesians had been enslaved by ignorance and fleshly lusts and they had been controlled in their thinking, pursuits, and conduct by an enslaved moral judgment. The light that was in them was darkness.

2. "*But now are ye light in the Lord.*" v. 8.

Jesus declared himself to be the light of the world. (Luke 2:32; John 1:4, 9; 8:12; 12:35, 36, 46). Jesus has given knowledge about God as well as revealed God; he has revealed the true man, the way of life, redemption and sacrificial service. Conscience is enlightened by him. By the sacrifice of Jesus the heinousness of sin appears, the value of human life is manifest, time and opportunity are seen to be golden and creation has a reason. Christ, the light of the

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world, is both the key and the door into the millenniums past, into the wealth of present being and into the vital assurances of the ages to come!

The light of Jesus is transmitted to his followers. v. 8; Matt. 5:14. The believer is more than a reflector; he is a tapor. The Psalmist said, "For thou wilt light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." (Ps. 18:28). The light that shone in and through the saints of Ephesus was the light of Jesus, but his light had found new tapors, centers of illumination and information. Believers are lights and lights are to be placed on the lamp stand that all within the circle of their rays may be made partakers of gospel knowledge. (Matt. 5:14, 15).

3. The result of believers outwardly showing the light that was shining within would exhibit three of the attributes of Jesus: "goodness, righteousness and truth." The fruit of light is goodness in nature, society, the home and the human heart; a disposition that produces good will and works, works directly opposed to the works of the flesh, deeds of darkness. Walking in the light would produce social and domestic uprightness as opposed to injustice and disorder. Walking in the light meant sincerity as opposed to hypocrisy, knowledge as opposed to ignorance and truth as opposed to error. These characteristics in the lives of Christians would be *lights*.

4. By walking in the light Christians would prove what is acceptable to the Lord. v. 10. The verb prove implies a proof with a view to determine whether a thing is worthy to be accepted." "Accepted" means well pleasing. By the aid of the light shining within, believers' thoughts, aims, motives, words and conduct would appear pleasing or displeasing to God. "The end of all moral investigation is, does it please the Lord?" The answer to the question, does it please the Lord, is at hand to him who is walking in the light. Jesus said, "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness

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(ignorance, uncertainty), but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12).

It was a high standard of attainment that was set before the faith of Ephesian believers, that of pleasing God. John the Baptist heard the Voice say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17). Jesus made the claim that he did always those things that pleased his Father. (John 8:29). The apostles who had been entrusted with the gospel felt keenly the importance of pleasing God and not men in its delivery. (1 Thes. 2:4). Enoch, before his translation, "had this testimony, that he pleased God." (Heb. 11:5). The experience of the apostle Paul and the Christian martyrs did not agree with Proverbs 16:7, unless it came to pass that their enemies became their friends after the apostle and martyrs were dead!

It is submitted, in order that the Ephesians overcome the temptation to "please men," confronted by the world, the flesh, the devil and some of their friends, it would be absolutely necessary for them to walk in the light, in the truth as it was in Jesus.

5. The Ephesian believers by walking in the light would reprove the unfruitful workers of darkness, v. 11. The word reprove in Luke 3:19 and 1 Tim. 5:20, means "to blame to the face." In 1 Cor. 14:24 and James 2:9 reprove means "to convince of crime or fault." In our lesson (vv. 11, 13) and in John 8:46, reprove means "to bring to light or expose by conviction." The apostle's point is that the children of God being Light, and by walking in the light, would throw light on the works of the flesh, exposing their nature, showing that they produce no fruit that is worthy, satisfying, healthful, but on the contrary, they bring shame, remorse, despair. The object in view, of exposing, is to convince the workers of darkness of error, that they are pursuing the wrong course. Gospel light exposes to save, not to destroy. The nature of light is to

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make manifest. "Everything that is made manifest is light." v. 13.

Vincent says, "Manifestation is a law of good and evil alike. That which is of the truth seeks the light and comes to the light. That which is evil avoids the light, and loves darkness better than light, but none the less is brought to the light and appears in its own light, (John 3:20, 21). This truth is embodied in another form in the parable of the tares. Growth is manifestation. By suffering the tares to grow, their difference from wheat, which at first is not apparent, is fully revealed." Jesus, according to Matt. 7:17, conveyed the same thought: "So every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." "Good fruit" throws light on the nature of the tree that produced it, and "evil fruit" throws light on the nature of the tree that produced it. Fruit is manifestation; and both kinds of fruit throw light, reveals.

6. The closing exhortation of this part of the apostle's message is, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light," v. 14. The quotation is thought to be a combination of Isa. 26:19 and Isa. 60:1. (Jonah 1:6).

It is evident that some of the believers of Ephesus had fallen asleep. They had ceased to be spiritually on the alert, eyes closed to passing opportunities, insensible of near dangers, indifferent toward the care of other members of the family. These sleepers, loiterers, were found among, in company with, the "dead in trespasses and sins". It would seem that they had been fellowshiping with the workers of darkness (v. 11), at least associating with them and hearing them "tell of those things which were done in secret." v. 12. Their excuse for loitering among the dead may have been to keep peace in the family, or to please an industrial master, to hold their positions or it may have been an uncrucified inclination, at any rate, they were sleeping on the

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devil's territory. It was not a becoming place for a saint to loiter. The cry, "Awake," bestir yourselves, rise from the dust and companionship of the dead, separate yourselves from the workers of darkness, when heeded, would open the way for Christ to give them light, knowledge and inspiration as these would be needed. Christians of Ephesus were to recognize that while they were in the world they were not of the world (John 17:16), and that a very definite social and spiritual separation from the workers of darkness must be carried into effect if they would receive spiritual illumination and blessings from Christ. (11 Cor. 6:14-18).

Fourth. To imitate God, follow Christ, is to walk carefully, v. 15.

Ch. 5:15-21. *"See then that ye walk carefully, not as fools, but as wise. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."*

The key word to this part of the epistle is "wisely." The believer would walk wisely.

1. By walking carefully.

Two ideas are combined: walk strictly, and consider well the kind of strictness. Have fixed principles of conduct as opposed to looseness, and make sure that your principles are of the right kind, "not as unwise (foolish) but as wise." One might make it the fixed rule of his life to lie three times each day and be careful to live up to his rule, but his rule would be unwise. One might have excellent rules for conduct, but careless about living up to them; wise in the

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selection of principles but unwise in practice. The children of God must be careful in theory and practice.

2. The children of God must act wisely in regard to time, "redeeming the time, because the days are evil." v. 16.

a. Time in our lesson is that portion of eternity that lies between the cradle and the grave. It is regarded as opportunity. Lit. "Buy up for yourselves the opportunity." To be "easy-minded," without sense of responsibility or interest in the value of passing moments is unwise, and is to miss the meaning of life itself. Loitering is a sin. Aimlessness is a crime. To be thoughtful, hopefully serious, mentally inquisitive, morally responsible, is wise.

b. "Buying up the opportunity" implies that the favorable "chance" is secured at the price of duty. Duty may appear uninviting and be void of inspiration, but when faithfully and thoughtfully performed buys out of passing moments the fitness for embracing the greater chance. The religion of Jesus places tremendous emphasis upon the "now" of time. Faithfully occupying the "now" is equipping to fulfill the measure of another and greater "now."

c. The reason the apostle assigned for "buying up the opportunity" was because "the days are evil." The excuse offered by the "easy minded" for not enlisting time and strength in Christian service was, "because the days are evil." Jesus said abounding iniquity would cause the love of many to wax cold. (Matt. 24:12). Strong opposition requires stronger prosecution. Evil days are daily challenges to faith and courage. The empty net must be cast again into the sea. Empty churches speak in tones of thunder, "Son, go work today in my vineyard." An unbelieving world challenges the faith of a believing Church. The days being evil demand that the children of God exhibit the stronger good.

3. Wise in understanding what the will of the Lord was. v. 17. "Wherefore" bears on all the preceding argu-

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ment. Walking in love, walking in the light and walking wisely would do two things: First it would enable the children of God to understand what the will of the Lord was, and Second, by their examples and instruction disclose to those without the advantages to be secured by doing the will of the Lord. The will of the Lord in the lesson means the rule of the Christian life. In this chapter it means to imitate God by following Christ, a living rule, walking in sacrificial love, walking in the light, walking carefully, wisely.

4. They would act wisely by embracing the opportunity to be filling with the Holy Spirit. v. 18.

a. "Be not drunken with wine." Drunkenness was common among the pagans, and converts to Christianity would have their old habits to fight and overcome. The temptation to indulge in wine drinking would especially be strong in those of an "easy mind." The argument was in vogue at that time, doubtless, that the human body needed an artificial stimulant, making place for an excuse for wine drinking. Paul's advice to Timothy has caused much stomach trouble.

b. Christianity is a religion of additions, subtractions, multiplications and divisions. Vices are prohibited and virtues are commended. The life is not left empty. There is no comparison between that which is given up in value with that which is received. In experience subtraction precedes addition. The lesser is given up that the greater may be received. Abram sacrificed three ties when he went from the Ur of the Chaldees and when he reached Canaan he received seven promises any one of which meant more to him and immeasurably more to humanity than all that he was required to give up. (Gen. 12:1-3). Governments may prohibit certain indulgences, vices, but governments can not succeed in supplanting vices with virtues; but Christianity can do that, and Christianity does do that. Believers were

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prohibited from wine drinking in which there was excess and were exhorted to be filling with the Holy Spirit, a spiritual stimulant!

Instead of believers resorting to wine for cheer and animation they were to open their hearts to the infilling of the Spirit. The Spirit would fill them with joy, heavenly melody, give them songs in the night, and in their social gatherings the joy of the heart would express itself in "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." v. 19. Col. 3:16.

c. By daily filling with the Holy Spirit believers would without conscious effort "give thanks to God for all things." The joy of the Holy Spirit would express itself in "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" to other members of the family and "unto God" in thanksgiving "for all things." "Always" thanking God for something is a good rule to follow, and it is not beyond the faith of the ordinary Christian, but to thank God "for all things" is beyond the conception of the ordinary believer. This exhortation is usually evaded by saying, "matters might be worse; thank God they are not worse; thank God I am better off than some others."

"All things" means all things, agreeable and otherwise. To understand the apostle's position it is necessary to consider, First, that he is not addressing human nature as such, but he is addressing the "new creature." Second, "the new creature" has been walking in sacrificial love and in the light, and he has been and now is filling with the Holy Spirit. Third, the "man born of the Holy Spirit" rejoices that he is counted worthy to suffer even shame for the name of Christ. (Acts 5:41). Fourth, the matured Christian by careful reflection on his past life discovers that the more enduring good has come to him through agencies more or less disagreeable. He realizes that he is under discipline, discipline designed to correct faults of which he has knowledge and faults of which he has been ignorant. Fifth, he entertains the expectation that when he has come to the

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end of the Christian militant life, and shall have the privilege of viewing his earthly career in the light of the cross and the heavenly world he will be fully qualified to appreciate the correctness of Rom. 8:28. In that faith he abides in thankfulness.

d. Thanks were to be rendered unto the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. v. 20.

Name stands for nature. The nature of Jesus was Divine human. Jesus is man's altar where he meets God and God meets man in mercy and grace. Jesus reconciled man to God by the cross which made it possible for God according to justice and holiness to receive reconciled man. Jesus is the way to the Father heart of God. The name nature of Jesus is the key-name that unlocks and opens the treasures of infinite grace and blessing!

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear,
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds
And drives away his fears."

5. Walking wisely meant submitting themselves to one another in the fear of God. v. 21.

The closing exhortation is one of the results of all that has gone before. In love they were to serve one another which could and would be carried out by the ever filling with the Spirit. The persons who were to practice mutual subjection, in honor preferring one another were the children of God, the "new creatures." There are no bosses here lording it over God's heritage; no slaves here bowing at the feet of a despot; no "stripes" here of the tyrants whip; for the subjection is mutual, the leader is as humble as the follower, the atmosphere is heavenly, the fellowship spiritual and the joy of service unspeakable and full of glory!

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Submitting themselves to one another was to be considered in the light of verse two, "to God a sweet smelling savour," and in the light of verse ten, "proving what is acceptable to God," under the guidance of verse eighteen, the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In fact, in experience, it meant the realization of the "mind that was in Christ." (Phil. 2:2-5).

CHAPTER X.

THEME: RELATIVE DUTIES OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

The apostle in conveying to believers Christ's relation to them and their relation to Christ used images that portrayed the fullness and richness of redeeming grace, grace to meet all their needs in all their relations with fellow members and with the world. In the first chapter believers are children; in the second chapter they are living stones in the temple of God; in the fourth chapter they are members of a body; in the fifth chapter they are "dear children," and in our present study some students have seen the image of the espoused bride of Christ. In the mind of the apostle, Christianity presents a complete system of present and eternal salvation.

First. The duties of the Christian Husband.

Chp. 5:23; 25-33. *"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church; and he is the savior of the body. . . . Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church; For we are membris of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak con-*

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cerning Christ and the Church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife as himself."

The use the apostle makes of the family institution, paralleling Christ and the Church, suggests the Church to be the espoused bride of Christ. Other scriptures, such as John 3:29; Matt. 9:15; 25:10; Rev. 9:7; 21:2; and 22:17, so represent the Church. In our present study if the apostle had the image of the Church as the espoused bride of Christ in mind he does not say so, and the image of a "body" would seem to more clearly express his thought.

1. *"Husbands love your wives."* v. 25.

The first duty of the Christian husband is to love his wife. Other duties would follow and would be fulfilled. The pagan's wife was a beast of burden, a necessary evil. Love, peace and contentment were not characteristics of pagan homes. Husbands, for the most part, were despots, their wives slaves. Christianity did not reverse the order, but Christianity's first message is to husbands whose responsibilities are of such a nature as to require love for their wives to be of the first importance. Christianity prohibits loveless marriages.

2. The extent of the husband's love and the manner in which he is to show it. "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it." Christ's love for the Church is the Christian husband's standard of love for his wife. The position and duties of the Christian husband are not as exalted as those of Christ, but they partake of similar responsibilities and his duties are to be fulfilled in the spirit of love.

Christ's love for the Church discloses quality and quantity and the proper manner of expressing it, and these manifestations reveal his fitness to be the lover, the savior and the head of the Church. First, Jesus Christ was qualified to be the head of the Church by an initial preparation. The image of the Church had been stamped on the heart of

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Jesus in the councils of eternity, and he came into the earth-life with the nature-name of the Church "graven on his hands." Throughout the earthly career of Jesus no surprises awaited him, no tragical disappointments confronted him, no sons of thunder startled him. If it be contended that Jesus shifted from the kingdom to the Church, the shift it would seem, is in the mind of the reader, and that Jesus followed a program of divine forethought "that the first shall be last, and the last shall be first." (Lu. 13:30). The kingdom is the ultimate goal and when the King shall sit upon the throne of his kingdom he will have a body, the Church.

The initial preparation of Jesus for his exalted position suggests that normal human beings come to the age of voluntary marriage with images of matrimonial mates more or less clearly outlined. These images of the soul belong to the initial preparation for marriage. Mistakes do not alter the fact.

Second. Jesus Christ was further qualified to be the lover and head of the Church by having been chosen to fill the position by the infinite Father, v. 23; 1:23; 4:12. The joy of Jesus consisted, basically, of being in perfect accord with his Father. "I do always those things that please him" expresses perfect obedience and implies supreme confidence and fellowship. (Jn. 8:29). The thrill of achievement in the consciousness of Jesus never lessened his pleasure in doing his Father's will. In his soul was ever heard the voice of infinite authority and approval.

The Creator has appointed man for marriage, the soul instinct for mating is inherent, and the husband's position is by divine appointment. v. 23. But all husbands are not qualified to meet the appointment. God has not appointed man to wrath, "but to obtain salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. 5:9). For one to refuse to obtain salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ means that he has dis-

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qualified himself for the appointment unto life. In like manner, the husband appointed to be "the head of the wife" may be woefully wanting in the qualifications necessary to fit him for the appointment. Appointment alone does not qualify; appointment is not the end of the matter.

Third. The manner in which Jesus showed his love for the Church expresses its depth and revealed its character: "He gave himself for it." v. 25. "He gave himself," as love's supreme expression. A man laying down his life for his friends is said by Jesus, among men, to be the "greater" expression of love. (Jn. 15:13). But "God commended" the "greatest" love among divinities when Jesus died for "the ungodly," "sinners." (Ro. 5:6-8). Love that gives all may reasonably demand all. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 Jn. 4:9, 10).

The essence of love is sacrifice. Homes created by love express that love in sacrificial service. The apostle John wrote, "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed, and in truth." (1 Jn. 3:18). Deeds of sacrificial character express both true love and love in truth. Paul's Christian husband shows his love in sacrifices of the Christ kind. Marriage ceremonies for the most part are wanting in the first principle of Christianity. Following the question, "Do you promise to love her" ought to be "and show your love in sacrificial service," for the home that is Christian is built upon this altar, the altar of sacrificial service. Surely, the wife who would take advantage of what she would term her husband's "good nature" is not the wife in our lesson.

Fourth. Jesus gave further proof of his fitness to fill the exalted position to which the Father had appointed him

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by his spirit of willingness. The spirit of willingness alone would not have fitted Jesus for his great work, but all other necessary qualifications without the spirit of willingness would have defeated the whole scheme of redemption. Included in the choice of the Father was Christ's physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual fitness for the work that he must do as the "head of the body." As I see it, it was never necessary for Jesus to back down or change his plans, or did he ever by word or act show that the complex problems of human life and redemption were beyond him. Fanaticism would soon have numbered him with the false messiahs of history, and egotism would have made him the object of universal ridicule. The enemies of Jesus have been forced to acknowledge that "never man spake like this man." (Jn. 7:46). And now, to crown his other qualifications we learn of his having said in the councils of eternity, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea thy law is within my heart." (Ps. 40:7, 8). Was Jesus ignorant of the redemptive price that would be required of him, and was for that reason willing to assume the responsibilities of redeeming the human race? Was ignorance the foundation of his willingness? Did Jesus, the Word, foreknow the sacrifices that would be required upon his part to take human beings in the rough and wash, cleanse and sanctify them and by the Holy Spirit have them merged into his own body? Jesus "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Re. 13:8) must have foreseen his Cross from the heights of his glory, and later, in the flesh, in the garden, felt in his soul the infamy of sin's hell and disgrace!

The spirit with which Jesus, while in the flesh, did his work filled heaven with a sweet odor. (Ch. 5:2). The assurance that he would succeed in drawing to himself a "body" that would be the living reality of the "image stamped on his heart" so thrilled Jesus with joy that he

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“endured the cross and despised its shame.” (He. 12:2).

Once, only did Jesus seem to hesitate and then but for a moment. He was in the garden. Was it when in the consciousness of Jesus “the old man,” the root of sin itself, “bitter hatred toward God” entered his pure and tender heart that he cried, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me?” “Let this cup pass from me” was conditioned upon “if it be possible.” The Father was not entreated to change the scheme of the ages for the sake of the human Son, and Jesus quickly, realizing that that cup could not pass from him if the redemptive system of the ages were to be perfected, rose to the sublimest heights of prayer and victory and cried, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” (Matt. 26:39). (Read He. 2:14-18).

The application of the foregoing is against forced marriages and also against persons entering into the marriage relation blindly, ignorantly. Paul’s Christian husband is qualified physically, intellectually, morally and spiritually to be “the head of the wife.” The other kind need not apply. However, we are faced with the fact that there are those who stand aloof from marriage because they lack the courage to assume the responsibilities of the home. Some such are moral cowards of the lowest type, profligates and licentious. Others are more sincere, but recognizing self-sacrifice to be a prime factor of successful marriage, they are fearful and draw back from what they term “the fatal step.”

Much that is being written and said upon the subject of marriage in our day is outside the Christian circle. It matters not what the attitude of “society” is toward marriage, or what certain judges and public women are saying, or what state legislatures may enact, or religious organizations proclaim, Paul’s principles of Christian marriage abides. His Christian husband offers himself willingly, preparedly and intelligently upon the altar of domestic sacrifice!

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Fifth. The immediate and ultimate purpose for which the qualified Christ gave himself for the Church. vv. 26, 27.

a. The immediate purpose for which Jesus gave himself for the Church is that it might be "washed," cleansed and sanctified. The means used is the word. The word which is the sword of the Spirit (Ep. 6:17) penetrates the marrow of being, "discerning between soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." He. 4:12. It is by means of the Spirit applied word, that word which conveys the truth, that believers are sanctified. (Jn. 17:17). The effect on the "inner man" of the Spirit-filled and Spirit-applied word is like the effect of the washing of water on the outer man. No reference is had here to water baptism.

b. The ultimate purpose for which Jesus gave himself for the Church is "that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." The thought is that of a soul delivered from all sin and perfected in the Christian graces. In the meantime believers are both restrained and constrained by the "living hope" that when Jesus shall appear the members of his body shall be like him; for they shall "see him as he is." Being like him will enable them to see him as he is. (1 Jn. 3:2, 3). The prayer of Jesus (Jn. 17:24), and his teaching (Jn. 14:3) sets before believers a high destiny in point of future relation and position, but they would be miserable if character did not agree with position. The assurance is given that such a tragedy can not take place, inasmuch as "spots," stains of sin shall have been removed and "wrinkles," marks of age, toil and suffering ironed out, and they shall be presented to Christ by himself, "holy and without blemish." v. 27. "Without blemish" is a much stronger term than "without blame." "Without blame" would be true of the child with good intent, but being immature of judgment its expression of its

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“good intent” is imperfect. But the child “without blemish” has attained to the likeness of Jesus. (Ph. 3:7-15). The Psalmist sang, “As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” (Ps. 17:15.) And the prophet Isaiah declares that the Messiah “shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” (53:11).

c. Was the object Jesus loved and gave himself for a worthy one? Even the enemies of Jesus must concede the nobility of his aim, *the redemption of the race*. Angels and men of high and low degree dare not deny the *purpose* of Jesus the matchless crown of heroism and nobility. Jesus and his cross constitute the growing magnetic center of the physical, moral, industrial, social and spiritual universe! In the final analysis the value of human deeds, heroisms, sacrifices and achievements are gauged by Jesus and his cross. And when Jesus shall see of the travail of his soul, human beings taken from the mire and corruption of sin, and see them white-robed in his own spotless righteousness, his soul shall be satisfied, and the wisdom of his sacrifice shall be vindicated before the judgment of all nations, all worlds and all intelligences!

Man is destined to offer himself upon an altar of one kind or another. Every pursuit in life has its altar, worthy or unworthy. Jesus is the Christian’s altar. Lusts of the flesh, money, fame, power and pleasure have their altars, and these altars are crowded with their devotees. Man is not asked, Will you or will you not go to an altar, but he is asked to choose his altar. Why, therefore, should it be thought incredible when the family hearth presents its altar?

Jesus gave himself for the Church that he might find in the Church a confidential friend, a help-meet, and that through grace the Church might attain to his own blessedness. Satan presents an altar and invites mankind to sacrifice itself upon it. His object is to create fears, suspicions,

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disturbances, wars, to demoralize and to destroy. Has faith been sacrificed upon the altar of fear? At whose altar?

Man may offer himself upon an altar of marriage for selfish reasons only. His wife to him is a beast of burden, a servant to his tyranny, a slave to his lust. This husband offers himself upon an altar, but for what purpose? Paul's Christian husband follows the example of Jesus. He loves his wife and expresses his love by offering himself upon the altar of sacrifice to the end that he may find in his wife a confidential friend, a social and spiritual companion, a helpmeet, who shares his joys and sorrows, victories and defeats, and ultimately will sit with him under the gathering shadows of evening and wait patiently for the "joy of morning!" (Ps. 30:5).

II. The husband is entreated to love his wife as his own body, even as he loves himself. vv. 28, 33.

A second standard is set before Christian husbands for their guidance, and light is shed on the basis of the union between husbands and wives. This union, however, typifies the relation of Christ to the Church and the Church's relation to Christ.

1. "*For we are members of his body.* v. 30.

The apostle affirms that believers are members of the body of Jesus. There is some mystery about Jesus and his body (32). His body is made up of human constituents and is the offspring of his humanity. The Church, his body, came from his pierced side and by every right it belongs to him. *Jesus is the head of his own body.* The members of his body suffer with him, rejoice with him, sacrifice with him, serve with him and the members of his body shall be glorified with him. (Ro. 8:17). Jesus' love for the Church is his love for his own body.

2. "*So ought men to love their wives as their own body.*" v. 28. The very name, woman, indicates that she was taken from man, taken from him and given to him. Eve came

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from Adam's side and was presented to him as part of himself, hence, "he that loveth his wife loveth himself." v. 28. This idea of oneness is based on Ge. 2:24; "and they two shall be one flesh," v. 31. Because they are one flesh, "shall a man leave his father and mother, and be joined unto his wife," v. 31. For the husband not to love himself, including his wife, is to be guilty of the sin of madness. There is no mystery about husbands loving their wives as their very selves. v. 33.

3. Jesus nourishes and cherishes his own body. v. 29.

The sacrificial work of Jesus opened the way for the Holy Spirit to give birth to his body, the Church. The Holy Spirit abides with its "Creation," (Jn. 14:16), ever comforting, correcting, guiding, reminding, testifying and inspiring. The body of Jesus is nourished by feeding on his word "as that word is studied by the members of his body, or is imparted to them by the ministers whom he has given. (Ch. 4:11-15; Ro. 10:14, 15). The body of Jesus is nourished and cherished by receiving life from the head, and warmed, encouraged and stimulated through fellowshiping with other members of the body. The body of Jesus is "nourished" and drawn into close embrace, "cherished," by means of faith, prayer, worship, singing, praising, self-denials, sacrifices, spiritual communions, witnessing and quiet meditations. The body of Jesus is nourished and makes progress through its manifold activities. Jesus, the head, is the sacrificial servant of his own body. Jesus found supreme joy and absolute freedom in sacrificial service. (Mk. 10:45; Ro. 15:3).

The Christian husband loves his own flesh; his own flesh includes his wife. He "nourishes," feeds, houses, and clothes his own flesh, and he "cherishes," appreciates, warms, comforts and prevents the hurt of his own flesh. To the extent of his ability he provides all needs, and ever recognizes that the foremost service is rendered by the head, the husband.

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Second. The Duties of the Christian Wife. vv. 22, 24, 33.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord"; So let the wives be (subject) to their husbands in everything; "And the wife sees that she reverence her husband." Reverence and submission sum up the duties of the Christian wife toward her Christian husband. Parallel with this union is the relation of the Church to Christ. What the Church is to Christ, on a lower plane, the Christian wife is to her Christian husband.

1. The ground on which the Church is to submit to Christ. Christ's love for the Church that expressed itself in his incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection and the provisions he has made to supply all the needs of the Church for time and eternity constitutes the sole ground of Christ's demand for the Church's submission to him. If Jesus were to fail to meet the needs of the Church, or if he in any way had failed to provide for its healthy birth, sustenance and ultimate blessedness, his right in law and grace to demand submission to his will would be void. But Jesus has not failed the Church. When conditions have been met his promise has been fully verified. (Matt. 28:20; 11 Cor. 12:9).

To whom shall the wife look for guidance and counsel in the affairs of the home? Whom has she the Christian right to expect will carry the leading, heavier responsibilities of the family? *Her Christian husband.* From Paul's Christian point of view the wife first respects her husband's responsible position, and he by giving evidence of his fitness to properly fill his position merits his wife's reverence, and it is submitted that respect and reverence are the necessary forerunners of *unconscious* submission. Paul's Christian yoke is easy and his Christian burden is light if the wife be married to his kind of husband!

If the husband be reckless of his obligations and assumes

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the position and attitude of a boss and attempts to enforce his will by quoting Paul he brands himself as being cowardly and devilish. Only when the husband measures up to Paul's standard has he the right under grace to expect Paul's kind of wife. Let it not be thought for one moment that God has joined woman's slavish devotion to man's selfish tyranny. When respect and reverence are wanting, neither the State nor the Church can force "God to join together." That which man "joins together" man can put asunder. The divorce evil is small compared with the miss-courtship and miss-marriage evil. It is submitted, that the large majority of Christian women would not object to Paul's Christian "submission" if they were married to Paul's Christian husbands!

Third. The Duties of Christian Children to their Parents.

Ch. 6:1-3. *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth."*

The duties of Christian children toward their parents are two-fold.

1. *"Children, obey your parents."* v. 1.

a. Obedience is the child's first duty toward its parents. As a means to the end of real worth in the formation of a stable character nothing else can take its place or compensate for its lack. Something very precious is lost from the treasure of the heart of the disobedient child however successful he may become in after years. The memory in after years of the comradeship which was the result of "obeying from the heart" parental authority will be worth infinitely more to him than memories of violations of parental rules and regulations.

b. The reason assigned for children obeying their parents is because "it is right." So vital is the moral principle

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involved that inspiration mentions the children's duty toward their parents before mentioning the duties of parents toward their children.' "For it is right" is the supreme reason. Right in principle and practice. Besides the child that does not learn to obey is denying itself the first requisite of leadership, and disregards the "primary law of success."

c. This duty is enjoined "in the Lord." The superior understanding of Jesus did not give him a reason for disobeying his parents. His parents were fallable, but Jesus "was subject unto them." (Lu. 2:46-52). A two-fold chord bound Jesus to his parents, natural and spiritual love, and his love for that which was "right" made parental injunctions "easy and pleasant." His example in this particular has been of untold value to the Christian Church through the centuries, and in our day the example of Jesus is the beacon to guide Christian children to the eminence of true greatness and blessedness.

2. "*Honor thy father and mother.*" v. 2.

For children to obey their parents "in the Lord," because "it is right," reaches still a higher degree of moral excellency, that of honoring, reverencing both the *position* and *judgment* of the parents. The spirit of willingness with which Jesus gave himself filled heaven with "sweet odor," thereby "honoring" his heavenly Father's position and judgment. Roman believers were entreated to recognize the "presenting of their bodies a living sacrifice" to be "a reasonable service." (Ro. 12:1). Such service would honor the Head of the Church.

It is conceded that the *judgment* of some parents would not deserve to be "honored." Nevertheless, Christian children, because of the moral principle involved, for their own sake, are commanded to honor, reverence their parents' position. The standard is an exalted one, and it must be admitted that many believing children have need of a special inducement "to obey and honor their parents"; hence, the

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apostle offers as that inducement the promise attached to the fifth commandment, "That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

The original promise that was made to the nation of Israel was, "that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. (Ex. 20:12). It is clear that the apostle used considerable liberty with this Old Testament promise, but it is evident that the spirit and principle of obedience and honor includes self-control, moderation, industry and regular habits of life, and that these tend toward longevity and prosperity.

It must be remembered, however, that the Old Testament placed great value upon material blessings, so much so, that where these were lacking it was considered and accepted as proof of God's disfavor. (Pro. 10:27; Isa. 65:22). The New Testament places the greater emphasis upon spiritual blessings. "A man's life," said Jesus, "consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Lu. 12:15), which was diametrical to the general belief of the Jewish nation. Jesus faced a materialistic Judaism. Jesus was so materially poor that "he had not where to lay his head." (Matt. 8:20). The interpretation that Jesus gave to the law and his exposition of the principles of the kingdom of God emphasized the triumph of the man of thought, faith and love over the physical man. He did not ignore or belittle the material side of life, but said, "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things (material) shall be added unto you," (Matt. 6:33). Whatever the "kingdom of God" shall mean in the age to come it is clearly stated that for the present time it means "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men," (Ro. 14:17, 18).

The apostles who had been "guided into the truth" by the Holy Spirit followed the teachings of Jesus and in their

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messages placed first things first, and never failed to hold before their hearers and readers the spiritual as being of fundamental importance. Even practical James wrote, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire," (James 5:1-3). If the apostle Paul held up before the Christian children of Ephesus material prosperity and long-life as special inducements "to honor their parents" it is clear that the apostle in this instance contradicted his own aim and spirit and all his written messages and public addresses. Dare we believe the apostle tempted the Christian children of Ephesus to drown themselves "in destruction and perdition?" (1 Tim. 6:9). Would it be fairer to interpret "well with them" by the spirit and aim of the New Covenant? That it would be "well with them" in spiritual realities? Such children would indeed be rich and prosperous in divine grace, in faith, in fellowship, in love and service. But, what, it is asked, of the "long life on the earth?" How few were the years of the apostles compared with the patriarchs! Christianity emphasizes "well-living" rather than "long-living." Paul's own life of less than seventy years have been worth infinitely more to the Church and humanity than the nine centuries and more of Methuselah. *Of more value because Paul is still living on the earth!* The virtue of the obedience of the child-Jesus, "subject unto his parents," has and is out-living the governments of man "on the earth!" The influence and spirit of children "obeying their parents in the Lord," and honoring their parents, have merited and obtained in indestructible earthly immortality!

Going back to the original promise, made to the Israelitish nation, that by their children "honoring their parents" the nation was guaranteed "long life in the land" which had

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been given to it, was literally fulfilled. The family with its respect for law and order was the unit of the strength of the nation. But when idolatry and its attendant evils were admitted the family was disrupted, the unit of strength destroyed, and the nation as a logical result lost its freedom, itself and its land.

It must be apparent to all that the changes which have taken place in the mechanical world in the last fifty years are no greater than the changes which have taken place in the American home, especially with regard to the nonchalant attitude of children toward their parents. America dare not hope to escape the inevitable result of the breaking down of parental authority. There is something basically noble, life and nation preserving, in "children honoring their parents."

Fourth. The Duties of Christian Parents to their Children.

6:4. *"And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."*

The first exhortation to Christian fathers, including mothers, was negative. Provoke means to irritate. The two principle ways by which parents irritated their children, thereby fostering an ugly, spiteful disposition, were by cruel teasings and the manner and spirit by which their children were corrected. Pagan parents were not steady in their treatment of their children; yesterday ignoring a certain prank, today laughing at the same childish act and tomorrow, for the same thing, punishing them severely. Punishment was a matter of parental humor, often a physical fight between parent and child. Children did not know what to expect: a smile or a blow.

The Second exhortation given to Christian parents was positive, "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Children were not to be *driven up*, but "bring

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them up," lead them, attend them, set them a Christian example. "In the nurture . . . of the Lord," Bushnell says, "giving children such a nurture in the body, as makes them superior to the body."

Nurture includes care of the body, feeding and warming it properly, promoting a symmetrical growth, and to what end? "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

Nurture includes the training of the mind, using educational means to the end of developing latent talents, calling forth hidden treasures, stimulating thoughtfulness, giving clearness of vision, accuracy of hearing and correctness of understanding, and to what end? *That by love they might serve one another.* (Gal. 5:13).

Nurture includes the developing of moral character, training to the end of reaching social purity, speaking the truth in love, honesty in business, uprightness of conduct and having "the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Phil. 3:9; Ro. 10:3-13).

Admonition means training, advising, entreating and especially correcting by word of mouth. Nurture and admonition, cover all the agencies necessary for full and thorough child-culture and training. "Of the Lord" obligates Christian parents to give that kind of "nurture and admonition" that has the approval of the Lord; that which the Lord authorizes. (De. 6:7, 20; 20:19; Pr. 22:6; Isa. 38:19; 11 Co. 12:14; Col. 3:21; 1 Tim. 3:4, 12; Titus 2:4).

Fifth. Duties of Christian Servants to their Masters. vv. 5-8.

"Servants, obey your earthly masters, with anxious care, giving them ungrudging service, as if obeying the Christ; not only when their eyes are on you, as if you had merely to

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please men, but as slaves of Christ, who are trying to carry out the will of God. Give your service heartily and cheerfully, as working for the Master and not for men; for you know that every one will be rewarded by the Master for any honest work that he has done, whether he is a slave or a free-man." (Quotation is from the Twentieth Century New Testament).

The apostle follows the same order in addressing servants and their masters that he followed in addressing children and parents. Naturally, we would expect children and servants to follow parents and masters. It is not clear why the apostle followed the order he did. It has been suggested that there were many Christian children and servants whose parents and masters were not Christians, and the apostle wanted such children and servants to show forth "the mind of Christ" while they were under adverse conditions. Such children and servants would need special instruction and encouragement.

The standard set before Christian servants is the "will of God." This standard brings them under the friendly, appreciative eye of their heavenly Father. Doubtless, there were many Christian servants in Ephesus who were forced to live and labor under the unsympathetic and cruel eyes of their masters. No inducements were offered to such servants to do honest work by their earthly masters, but the great Master would reward them for "honest work cheerfully performed." Jesus would not be influenced by their social standing. The slave was as precious to him as was the freeman. Basically, the spirit of the democracy of grace has proven to be the prime factor in abolishing human slavery from civilized countries, and this same spirit persists in knocking at the doors of the rulers of the great industries of America and of the civilized world, and it shall continue

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until the thrones of industrial, political and social injustice shall topple to the earth!

Sixth. The Duties of Christian Masters to their Servants. v. 9.

"And masters, treat your servants in the same spirit. Give up threatening them; for you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that before him there is no distinction of rank."

Christianity furnishes the single rule for servants and masters as well as for wives and husbands. The threatening that was practiced by pagan masters, that was to be given up, was the master-despot with whip in hand, whose looks, manner and language threatened the very lives of his servants. The problems of despotism and slavery, of capital and labor and of wealth and hunger are of slow solution. Christianity has set its standard of justice, "of live and help live," and Christianity has furnished the spirit which if let work unhindered will in time solve justly all industrial, social, economic and political problems of the human race.

Note a. Christianity would abolish every kind of slavery and injustice. All human relations would be controlled by the rule of the "first mile," the golden rule, and abounding grace would lead on to the heart of the "second mile," Christ and his Cross! There would be no ground for strikes, lockouts and forced idleness.

Note b. The apostle saw and wrote upon the subject of "the relative duties of the children of God" from the point of view of a member of a body of which Jesus was the head. Wives are exhorted to be subject to their husbands "in the Lord"; children obey your parents "in the Lord"; parents in the exercise of your authority let it be "of the Lord"; servants give your masters honest service "as if obeying Christ," and masters exercise your rights in the same spirit, recognizing your obligations to the great Master.

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Note c. The Apostle applies the principles of the kingdom of God to all human relations. (1) He associates Jesus with all human dealings, relations and problems. (2) Husbands, wives, children, masters and servants are rightly related when "pleasing the Lord."

CHAPTER XI.

THEME: SPIRITUAL WARFARE.

Chp. 6:10-17. *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."*

"Finally," "in conclusion," Paul conveys "some thing left over," or a summing up of the whole matter. He had been addressing different groups of believers, now, at last, he calls fathers, mothers, children, servants and masters to unite under the banner of Christ, and take a united stand against their common foes.

Our present study covers the believer's war, his foes and his armor.

I. The Believer's War.

The imagery employed by the apostle in our lesson embraces the idea of Christian warfare. While all life in our sphere of existence battles to live, the Christian's war is especially characterized by its severity. The believer's weapons are not carnal, but his fiercest conflict is against the

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carnal; such as evil imaginations, carnal thoughts and secret disobedience. (11 Cor. 10:4-6). He is also forced to war against making "shipwreck of faith," and against entangling himself with the affairs of this world, and against the temptation to yield to spiritual despondency because of afflictions. (1 Tim. 1:18; 11 Tim. 2:4; Heb. 10:32).

Spiritual militancy was a much used theme of the apostle for the reason that the believer's struggle, fight, against foes within and without is ever present and is an universal experience. The "good fight of faith" is a reality. (1 Tim. 6:12).

II. The Believer's Foes. vv. 11-13, 16.

First. The Devil. v. 11.

The Devil in the New Testament, a proper name, means enemy, antagonist, slanderer, the opposer of all good. The Bible teaches the existence of the personality of the Devil, a superhuman tempter older and stronger than man.

In the Pastoral Epistles the name used discloses the nature of the Devil's work. He opposes, weakens, destroys by slandering, by belittling. Two of the three temptations that assailed Jesus were introduced with "If thou be the Son of God" do this, do that. Slanderously, he suggested to Jesus that he was not the Son of God. The proof the Devil required was such as would have proven the contrary. The third temptation was the offer of a bribe. (Matt. 4:1-10).

In our study reference is made to "the wiles of the devil." He does not engage the believer in the open. He conceals both his hiding place and his identity. He never announces, "I am the Devil, and I am come to deceive and to destroy." A wolf in sheep's clothing, or as an angel of light, discloses his "wiles" and not the horned monster of art. When Jesus asked the demoniac his name the reply was "legion." Legion meant many, but many what? Identity was not confessed. (Lu. 8:30).

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"The wiles of the devil" are made manifest in his attitude toward truth. He knows that truth can not be destroyed. He does not attempt the impossible. He does not openly deny the truth, but he obscures it, perverts it. "Yea, hath God said?" leads the Adams and Eves to doubt and finally to deny the truth of God's word. The question of Satan offers suggestions which are the seed thoughts of doubts that lead to denials.

The "wiles of the devil" are seen in his mesmeric power to make sin, the everlasting enemy and destroyer of man, appear pleasant, inviting and friendly. Multitudes under his mesmeric power leap from the "frying pan into the fire" and for the time being like it. The worse in sin is made to appear more inviting and pleasant while the better in grace and faith are made to appear more and more difficult to attain, and to many as not being worth the effort. He imposes no unsurmountable difficulties in the way of legislating and proclaiming against carnal wars so long as "lust" the breeder of war is left undisturbed. (James 4:1, 2). Carnal pleasures under Satan's influence dazzle the eye with their glory and blinds the eye to their hellish effects. The devil is *the* hypnotist of the world.

Second. The Believer's Foes are Wrestling Foes. v. 12.

The wrestling foes of the believer would not at first appear so tragically antagonistic, but the very fact that it is a wrestling contest instead of a fighting contest might suggest to the believer that the outcome of the contest is not so important, hence the temptation to grow indifferent. Wrestling implies nearness. The believer and his antagonist have hold of each other, they are face to face. Satan does not fight in the open, but these wrestlers are more open, more honorable. Are they? The believer is made to believe that his friendly foes are his worldly neighbors, who by their examples, influence and words oppose his life of grace and faith; but the apostle says the believer is not wrestling with his neighbors

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in fact; that back of his friendly enemies are "principalities and powers, rulers of darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places." The believer wrestles with his evil imaginations, selfish thoughts and desires and might be under the impression that he can take care of himself. The apostle informs him that while he is wrestling with himself he is wrestling with more than himself. In fact his wrestlers are organized evil spirits who are under the generalship of the Devil. Their rule is the rule of darkness. Their rule reaches all parts of the earth causing ignorance, superstition, atheism, crime, hatred, murder, lying, theft, pain and sorrow of every kind. The believer is confronted by these results of their rule of darkness daily, and he wrestles, organizes, teaches, prays and gives, to overcome them.

"Spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places" may refer to the air region of the devil and his organized hosts of demons, but inasmuch as this is a wrestling contest and one of the wrestlers is on earth, it would seem to refer more directly to the fact that the believer would be, at least, challenged to combat while in heavenly places. Heavenly places would include his Church associations, in his Christian home and in experience while in close fellowship with Christ.

Just a little while before the disciples had been sitting with Jesus in a heavenly place, gathered around the table of their first communion. Now they have come to the garden and three of them with their Lord have entered the garden, and Jesus is saying to them, "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." (Mark 14:38). Transfigurations on the mount are followed by battles with evil at the base of the mount. (Luke 9:28-42). Fullness of joy, clearness of vision today may be the Spirit's way of foretelling the soul of struggle tomorrow and preparing it for the combat.

Third. "The evil day." v. 13.

"When it rains it pours." "The evil day" is any day when the believer is severely tried. When nothing goes right

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the temptation is strong to go wrong. The evil within the heart of the Christian is an inner response to evil without. The evil without, like the poor, is always present. "When I would do good, evil is present with me," wrote the apostle. There are days when the inclination to respond is stronger than on other days. The believer is off guard, he has been negligent or mentally worried or physically indisposed. Under such conditions the temptation to yield to the common temptations of life is strong. And the evil day may mean, surely includes, the day of great strength when the believer is equipped to achieve great things for Christ and the Church and there is a marshalling of the evil host against him. The assault is terrific. When a boy, the author heard a Christian man tell his neighbor that on the day before, while in a religious service in a nearby church, he had made the sincerest consecration of himself to God that was possible for him through grace to make, and that when he reached his home he discovered that his cattle had broken down the fence and strayed away, and that the hogs had broken into a field of corn!

Fourth. "The fiery darts of the wicked." v. 16.

Fiery darts, we learn, were weapons tipped with inflammable materials, variously constructed and were designed to set on fire. These weapons could be thrown great distances, making but little or no noise and were extremely successful in their mission of destruction. Some temptations are impelled from a great distance. The attack is indirect. The appearance of the "thing" was harmless enough, no evil was intended or even suspected, and before the soul was aware of it, it awoke to find itself in the coils of temptation. It was this phase of the devil's work that led Paul to write, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." (1 Thess. 5:22).

The scattering power of evil is implied; the flame of the fire tipped dart spreads. This character of temptation

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sounds no trumpet. It enters the heart through the eye or the ear when the believer is depressed, or when he is normal, or when he is in the heavenly place thoughts "from afar," thoughts that are foreign to his habits, steal upon him with the stealth of a thief. When the "fiery dart" strikes susceptible material, such as unholy ambitions, or covetousness, or vanity, or anger, or any of the lusts of the flesh, a fire is kindled that spreads with ever increasing loss and destruction. No evil existeth to itself. One sin breeds another. The self-righteousness of the elder brother was just as susceptible as the lusts of the younger brother, the prodigal. (Luke 15:29, 30).

Are we surprised at the multitude hesitating about taking a stand for Christ and the Church in the face of the crafty, subtle and mighty foes of faith and righteousness? It is either a life yielded up to God or evil, which? An intelligent understanding of the foes of the Christian life prepares the believer to have a keen appreciation of the armor God has provided for his protection.

III. The Believer's Armor. vv. 11, 13-18.

The tenth verse, "Be strengthened in the Lord, and in the power of his might" contains the sum of the believer's defense against all foes, and is the sure ground of his progress in the face of his foes. The "power of God's might" is the believer's strength by faith. (3:16). The power, or the strength of God's might had provided the believers of Ephesus with an armor that guaranteed full protection, and the apostle proceeded to name the parts of the armor.

It is reasonable to suppose that the apostle who was chained to a Roman soldier when he wrote the epistle, saw in the Roman armor a fitting illustration of the Christian armor and his alert mind was quick to appropriate the circumstance to his advantage and to the profit of his readers. The full Roman armor consisted of six pieces, and the apostle found something in the provision "the strength of God's

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might had made for the believer which corresponded with each and every part of the Roman armor.

First. "Therefore stand, having your loins girt about with truth," v. 14; Isa. 11:5.

The loins is the central point of the physical body. In scripture it is the seat of power, and it was the point of junction for the warrior's armor. The girdle, the last piece to be placed, was the bond of the whole, and was the first piece mentioned by the apostle. First, because of its importance. Love for the truth and its possession preceded all other parts of the Christian's equipment. Truth here is knowledge about Jesus in his relation to the whole plan of redemption. Jesus and his sacrificial work in the believer's behalf was the "girdle of truth." All other parts of the armor had been provided with reference to, in agreement with the central, binding truth of Jesus and his cross. For the Ephesian believers to have assigned to Jesus a secondary place of importance in their fight against their foes would have meant that they would have been "air-beaters," without a captain and without the "strength of God's might." Calvary is the Waterloo of all the powers of darkness. Pentecost, helmet, firm-footing, faith, righteousness, and the sword of the Spirit came by way of the cross of Jesus and are everlastingly dependent upon the efficacy of that sacrifice.

The girdle encircles the whole. Jesus is the sum of all Christian virtues and graces. And the virtues and graces of Jesus encircles the life, no link is missing, no part of the believer's life is left exposed. Jesus embodies all goodness, reaching from the cup of cold water to the cross and from the weakness of the infant to the strength of the infinite Father; Jesus "is all and in all." "Stand therefore," take your stand on this principle of redemption before entering the conflict against the foes of God and man!

Second. "Stand therefore . . . having on the breastplate of righteousness." v. 14.

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The breastplate in the Roman armor covered the breast, the heart. The material of the breastplate depended on the weapon used in warfare. According to history, Otha's soldiers used linen corselets; barbarous tribes used horn, and the Romans in the apostle's day used metal. The metal breastplate protected the Roman soldier from the thrusts of the spear, the chief weapon of warfare.

The composition of the believer's breastplate is righteousness, moral uprightness or rectitude. This righteousness is not self-begotten, but it is the *imputed*, righteousness of Christ and it is *infused*. (Rom. 4:16-25; 11 Cor. 5:21; 11 Peter 1:4). The believer appropriates the uprightness of Jesus by faith and the essence of the rectitude of Jesus is love. (1 Thes. 5:8). Jesus' standard of thinking, speaking, doing and serving is the standard of the believer's life, and the expression of his life. "Having on" indicates that it has been accepted, appropriated. The righteousness of Jesus protects the heart from all false passions.

Third. "And your feet shod with the preparation (readiness) of the gospel of peace." v. 16.

Roman soldiers wore sandals, bound with thongs over the instep and round the ankle and having the soles studded with nails. This gave them sure and firm footing.

The Greek word translated preparation means readiness. In the Hellenistic Greek it was sometimes used to mean "firm foundation," and that thought is included in the apostles use of the word in our lesson. Readiness implies previous preparation as well as alertness, and carrying and presenting the gospel of peace to a hostile world required "firm footing." The gospel of grace is a system of eternal peace between God and man, between Jews and Gentiles, between Germans and Frenchmen and between man and his own conscience. The believer being firmly established in the gospel of grace, other things being equal, would have mental balance, a profound sense of rest, quietness and assurance under

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all conditions in his fight against his foes. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." (Isa. 26:3).

Fourth. "Above all, taking the shield of faith." v. 16.

The Roman shield, which constituted the outer protection, was oblong in shape, four feet by two and one-half feet in size, and was usually curved on the inner side. The shield was made of light wood, and was held on the left arm by means of a handle, thus by skillful use of the shield, the entire body was protected from the weapons of the enemy.

The believer's shield is saving faith; a saving faith that endures throughout his earthly warfare. The instrument that he used to secure salvation is the same instrument that he uses to be sustained in salvation. Faith in God the Father, the eternal lover and giver; faith in Jesus Christ who through the sacrifice of himself wrought for him redemption, the forgiveness of sin and is now his living Advocate at the right hand of God; faith in the Holy Spirit that regenerated him, baptized him into the body of Christ, corrects, guides, comforts and witnesses of Christ and enables him to cry, "Father." Faith is the victory that overcomes the world. (1 Jn. 5:5). The believer is justified by faith and lives, draws from the store house of infinite grace that which is needed to supply all his needs. (Rom. 5:1; Gal. 3:6).

Fifth. "And take the helmet of salvation." v. 17.

The helmet, a protection for the head, was of skin strengthened with metal, and adorned with a horsehair crest. It was also furnished with a visor for the face.

"Take the helmet which is salvation"; salvation includes all that God has done for humanity through Jesus Christ: redemption, justification, regeneration, sanctification and glorification, all are included. The word "take" here is a different word from that used in verses 13 and 19. In those verses "take" means to pick up while here it means to accept,

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to receive as God's gift, receive by faith. The intellect is protected from vain, self-righteous thoughts and ambitions. (Luke 18:9-14).

Sixth. "And (take) the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." v. 17.

Swords, arrows, and spears were the weapons mostly used in the days of the apostle in warfare. The armor which was provided by the Roman government was designed to protect from these instruments of death.

The word of God is the "sword of the Spirit." The Holy Spirit inspired the speakers and the writers of the word (11 Peter 1:21); the Holy Spirit interprets the word (1 Cor. 2:9-16); the Holy Spirit uses the word to penetrate the marrow of life (He. 4:12); the Holy Spirit reminds the believer of the words of Christ (John 14:26); the Holy Spirit uses the word to defend the believer (Matt. 4:1-10); the Holy Spirit employs the word in offensive warfare, adds to the Church such as are being saved (Acts 2:17-39), and the "word," the "sword of the Spirit" abideth forever." (1 Peter 1:25). The command of inspiration is "Preach the word; be instant in season, and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine." (11 Tim. 4:2).

Just as the Roman government provided the Roman soldier with his armor, in like manner God has provided the Christian warrior with an armor that is suited for his protection, and also that will fit him for aggressive service. The believer is exhorted to "put on the full armor of God" which will qualify him to take a "stand" at the beginning of the battle, v. 14, and endure throughout the conflict v. 11, and "having done all to stand," v. 13. The end of the conflict finds him "strong in the Lord."

CHAPTER XII.

THEME: AN AMBASSADOR IN BONDS, AND HIS REQUEST FOR PRAYER.

The figure of an armor is dropped, but the war goes on. The entire epistle breathes the spirit of prayer and praise; the spirit of one who saw the Christian life, and thought in the soul-atmosphere and attitude of prayer. The epistle contains the record of two of the apostle's prayers in behalf of the believers addressed (Ch. 1:16-19; 3:14-19), and the exhortation that they live the prayer-life.

Ch. 6:18-20. *"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints: And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."*

I. THE PRAYER-LIFE.

The prayer-life consists of praying always, through the medium of every kind of prayer, secret, public, silent, vocal, social, petitionary and even ejaculatory as the Spirit leads and opportunity affords. The words "cry, cried and crieth" are found in scripture at least fifty times, describing the leaping of the soul toward God in prayer. While praying is asking, at the same time, it is much more than mere asking. The prayer-life is more than the habit of using the language of prayer, or making signs, or counting beads. The prayer-life is essentially the Spirit-filled life. Prayer is ever begotten of the Spirit. Praying "in the Spirit" is offering the prayer inspired by the Spirit.

Prayer is both cause and effect. Mighty results have been

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produced through the instrumentality of prayer, and known or unrealized, such prayers have ever been the result of the cooperation of the "inner life" with God. Praying always to God implies living always in accord with God. Living in accord with God implies realizing absolute dependence upon God for life, salvation, strength, motive, reason and objective. It is evident, that the Spirit begotten prayer, is first and always for the grace of humble submission and free obedience to the will of the heavenly Father. There are no blessings outside the will of God.

The prayer-life is imperative (Luke 18:1-8; 21:36; 1 Thes. 5:17), and it can not be staked off into periods, such as morning, noon and evening, youth, manhood and old age, unless it is understood that these stated periods includes the times between, times when the Spirit-filled soul is kept in close fellowship with God through the medium of secret or silent prayer. There are no unimportant links in the chain of life.

God made "known his ways unto Moses, and his acts unto the children of Israel." (103 Ps. v. 7). The child that lives in fellowship with its father and in obedience to him will be sure to sense its father's wishes, understand his ways which is more desirable than to now and again recognize its father's acts. The believer who has come to know the ways of God through obedience is prepared to pray in harmony with God's will, and his attitude toward God is one of praise and submission.

Included in the prayer-life is "watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication." Watching for what? In the garden Jesus commanded three of his disciples to "watch and pray," lest they enter into temptation. "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak." (Mk. 4:38). The three disciples fell asleep while Jesus was praying. They succumbed to the demands of the flesh on an exceedingly important occasion. The question Jesus asked carried a re-

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buke, "couldst not thou watch one hour?" What were they expected to watch? Their comrades had been stationed at the gate and would be in position to give the alarm at the approach of the enemy. The "watch" of the three disciples was confined to the inside of the garden. According to Matthew Jesus had said to the three, "tarry ye here, and watch with me," designating the spot where they were to remain, and also defining their duty to be watching "with him." Jesus then went a "little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed," (26:38, 39). Watching "with" Christ surely meant watching Christ. The "little farther" was not beyond their vision even under the shadows of night. There may have been the natural craving in the heart of Jesus for comradeship, human fellowship, in the hour of his deepest agony. But was not his agony too deep to be soothed by human sympathy? Was Jesus thinking of what man could do for him in the hour when he was doing all for man? Did the sacrifice of Jesus need the sympathy of man to make it complete? Was there one hour in the sacrificial life of Jesus when he needed or even craved for his own sake the "watch" of human eyes? In time would not that "watch" have claimed some "merit" for having aided in the work of redemption?

Jesus had foretold his death and resurrection. His enemies who demanded of Pilate that every precaution be taken to keep his disciples from stealing the body of Jesus, based their demand on the report that Jesus had said he would rise again. Had the disciples "watched" instead of hiding they might have witnessed the greatest scene of all ages, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But their unbelief, slowness of heart to understand, kept them from watching.

It is reasonable to suppose that the disciples watched against falling asleep, but their watch proved futile. The agony and prayer of Jesus in the garden have been and still are shrouded in more or less of mystery, a mystery that

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might have been cleared up had the three disciples of Jesus been intent upon noting every movement of Jesus, strained their ears and caught every sound of his voice, watched him with an intentness that would have made sleep impossible and at the same time qualified them to have written into the record additional words and petitions of Jesus that would have made clear "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." The heart is drawn toward that which it intently watches, good or evil.

"Watching," in our lesson, coupled with prayer, covers the same ground that Jesus covered and goes one step farther. Believers were to watch against prayers of a selfish, fleshly kind, a subtle temptation to ask amiss by yielding to the lusts of the flesh. The flesh that fell asleep a little later used a sword, and still later denied knowing Jesus! Believers would be able to successfully watch against the flesh by keeping the "eyes of their heart" fixed on Jesus their example as well as their Savior, and this the Holy Spirit would aid them to do. "Looking unto Jesus" would prove to be their only source of victory and their only means of successful watching. (He. 12:2).

Watching for answers to prayer would not seem to be necessary, for those who "in the Spirit are living the prayer-life." It would seem that the Spirit that inspired the prayer would disclose the answer. But there might come times when the Father would have his reason for delaying the answer or by answering in an unexpected manner or by giving an answer far beyond that which had been asked for; in which cases it would be necessary for the petitioner to watch in the Spirit for answers to prayer.

As an example of a delayed answer to prayer, Luke records that the angel informed Zacharias that his prayer had been heard. Evidently years had passed since the priest had offered a prayer to God for an heir. Zacharias and his wife, Elisabeth, had ceased to hope for an heir. The priest

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had ceased to watch for an answer and when the answer was assured he doubted and was smitten with dumbness for a period of time. (Lu. 1:18-23).

“Watching” for occasions to pray would hardly be necessary for the believer who was living the prayer-life. But there was one subject for prayer that was not to be overlooked. That subject will be considered later; now, the thought is watch for occasions to offer special prayers, or supplications. The subject would be important and special prayers would be very necessary. In this spirit of watchfulness and prayer there was to be no “letting up”; the believer must “persevere.”

II. Subjects for Prayer. vv. 18, 19.

In our lesson two subjects for prayer are given:

First. Pray for all saints, believers.

“Supplications,” were special prayers which were to be offered for all believers, the Church. One of the objects believers should have in view in assembling themselves together is to supplicate a throne of grace in behalf of the Church, that the Church be intelligently aggressive in all its departments of service, and that the Church be kept faithful to its mission, and that its members “walk worthy of their vocation.” In the apostle’s day the Church was persecuted on every side. The enemies of the Church were strong, bold and vicious. The need for supplications was apparent. In our day the need is as great, but not so apparent, as in the first century. Then the enemies of the Church for the most part were on the outside, whereas now, the more injurious enemies are in the Church. Special reference is made to a disposition to be “at ease in Zion,” to compromise with social and industrial forces that are working in direct opposition to the teachings and spirit of Jesus, but because of their show of friendship for the Church, the Church has become “like dumb dogs that have lost their bark,” the thrilling voice of warning is all but hushed.

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Second. Pray for me. v. 19.

The apostle, who was a prisoner, mentioned three specific blessings the saints of Ephesus were to ask of God in his behalf: (1) That utterance be given to him. From every reasonable point of view, the apostle had all the qualifications of a gospel messenger, an exceptionally clear call, the history of the unfolding of the plan of redemption, the fundamental facts of the gospel, and the advantage a rich and manifold experience gave; what more could be needed? *The gift to convey in words the truth.* Paul recognized that previous experiences in using the "gift" of "utterance" and his present knowledge of the truth did not exclude the need of special grace to *exercise* the "gift of utterance" whether in or out of prison. The gospel messenger never reaches the point of such great efficiency in utterance that each and every occasion when the gospel message is to be delivered, spiritual enduement of power is not required. The messenger's sense of dependence upon God for the "gift of utterance" was made keener by reason of being a prisoner for having "uttered" the message. (2) Pray "that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel." That which had been hidden in God, but now was made known, the gospel of the "new creation," which was for all nations, needed a messenger with an authoritative voice. "Opening the mouth" meant that the matter to be delivered had been carefully prepared, thought out beforehand. "Inspirations of the moment" had thrilled the heart of Paul, doubtless, many times, but he did not depend on them. (3) Pray "that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." The message to be delivered was the gospel of grace, and courage begotten of love was to characterize the manner of "utterance." "Speak the truth in love"; there is no fear in love." (1 Jn. 4:18).

III. An Ambassador in Bonds. v. 20.

An ambassador is one who officially represents another,

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usually a superior. Because Paul had represented Jesus, his superior, he had been arrested and made a prisoner. While "in bonds" the temptation to become subdued into tameness would be strong, therefore, "pray for me" that what time I am in bonds I may continue to be the ambassador of Jesus."

One of the striking features of the prisoner's request is the absence of any plea to the saints that they pray for his deliverance from his bonds. Did he rest in the assurance that "all things" in his case "were working together for good?" (Ro. 8:28).

CONCLUSION:

Ch. 6:21-24. *"But that ye may also know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things. Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts. Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."*

Paul assigned two reasons for sending Tychicus, a beloved and faithful brother, to Ephesus. The first reason was that the messenger by word of mouth would convey to them matters pertaining to the personal affairs of the apostle. The affairs of the apostle were such as related to his prison life, treatment, physical health, mental attitude and spiritual state. The second reason for sending Tychicus to them was that by word of mouth he might comfort the hearts of the saints. Such comfort would include many personal greetings to old friends and such other words of Christian assurance to one and all that would confirm and establish them in faith and love. Did he remind them of past experiences of victory? Did he send them personal proof of the fact that Christians could joy in tribulations? (Rom. 5:3).

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CLOSING BENEDICTION

“Peace to the brethren,” likely, meant the members of the brotherhood addressed who were personally acquainted with the apostle, “and all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ” would be believers of other places and those who were not personally acquainted with the apostle. Christ who had made peace between them and God and between Jews and Gentiles would continue to be their “peace” so long as they trusted, rested in him. They had not merited the privilege of being “at one with God”; that privilege had come to them through grace. Living in conscious dependence upon God’s grace would keep their hearts warm with the love of Christ and their love for Christ would express itself in a vigorous faith, a faith that produced good works. Love and faith are companions. “In sincerity,” unfading, permanent. “Amen,” so might it be.



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